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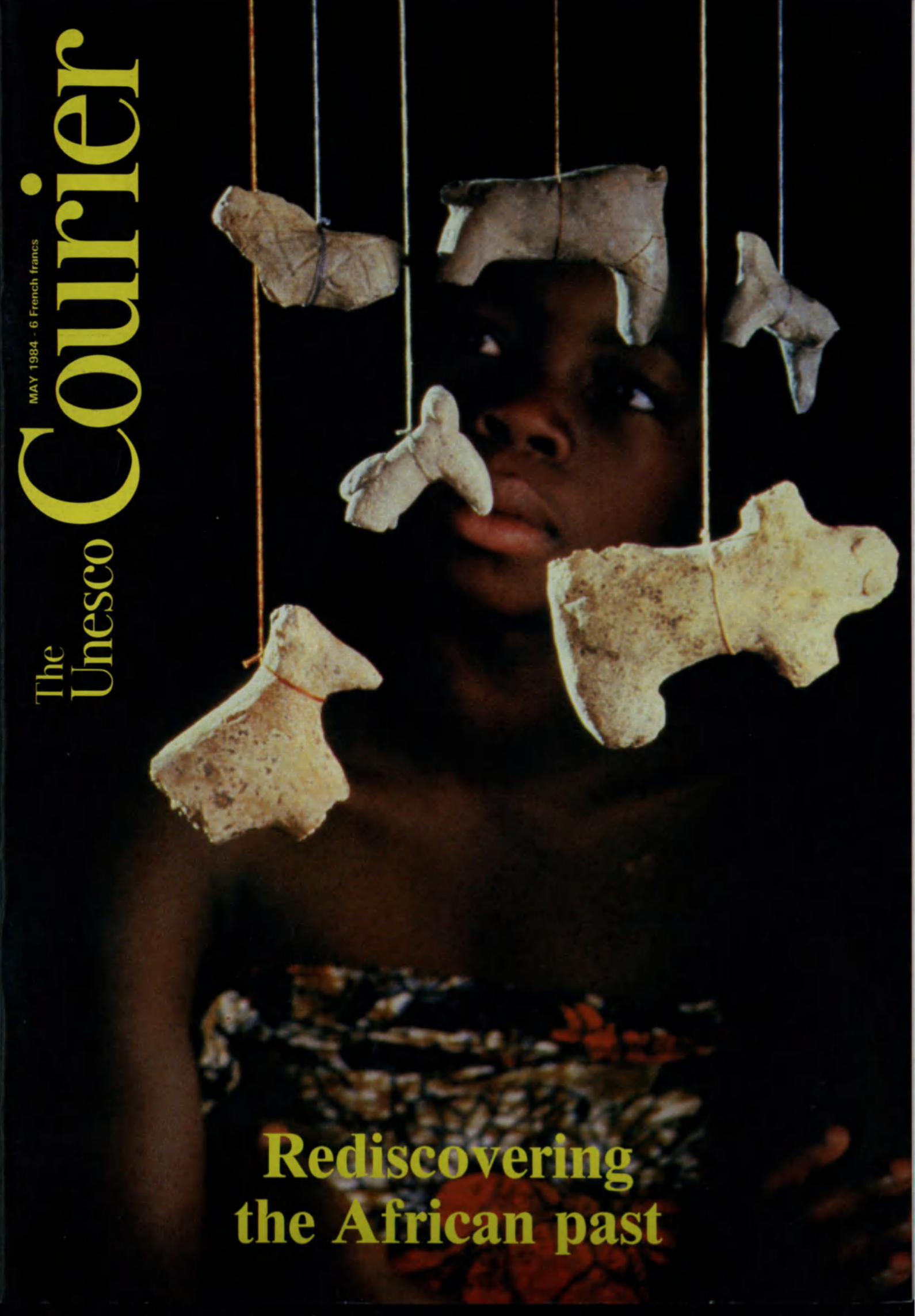

Rediscovering the African past

A time to live...

23 | The Caribbean

Black Shack Alley

"Those hands that M'man Tine washed so fastidiously each evening, and even more meticulously on Sunday mornings, seemed to have been fired, hammered against a rock, buried in the earth and then uprooted with the soil sticking to them; dipped in dirty water, dried in the sun, and cast with sacrilegious carelessness on the whiteness of that sheet, in the gloom of that hovel."

These lines are taken from *La Rue Cases-Nègres* (1950, "Black Shack Alley"), a novel by the Martinique writer Joseph Zobel which describes the struggle of the agricultural workers of Martinique in the 1930s. A screen adaptation of this classic work of Antillean literature has been made and directed by Euzhan Palcy under the title *Rue Cases Nègres* (1983). This still from the film shows the two main characters, José and his grandmother, M'man Tine.

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A window open on the world

May 1984
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Cover: A young inhabitant of modern Jenné, a bustling town in the inland delta region of present-day Mali, admires the remains of some miniature toy animals, made of clay and dating from between 250 BC and 300 AD, that were recovered from the neighbouring site of Jenné-jeno (ancient Jenné), west Africa's oldest city. (See article page 12).

Photo Michael and Aubine Kirtley © ANA, Paris

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Editorial

MAN is an historical animal and African man is no exception. Just as everywhere else in the world, he created his own history and his own idea of it. Yet myth and prejudice of every kind have left the world with a grossly distorted view of African history, if not with the impression that Africa has no history at all.

After a long period of painstaking research and meticulous preparation, the record is now being put straight with the publication of successive volumes of Unesco's eight-volume ***General History of Africa.***

The General Conference of Unesco has placed the preparation and drafting of the ***History*** *under the sole intellectual and scientific responsibility of the 39-member* ***International Scientific Committee for the Drafting of a General History of Africa,*** *two-thirds of whose members are Africans and whose Secretary is Mr. Maurice Glélé.*

Following the directives of the General Conference of Unesco, the Committee, at its first session, defined the principal characteristics of the work in terms which merit quotation at some length:

■ *Although aiming at the highest possible scientific level, the history will not seek to be exhaustive and will be a work of synthesis avoiding dogmatism. In many respects, it will be a statement of problems showing the present state of knowledge and the main trends in research, and it will not hesitate to show divergencies of doctrine and opinion where these exist. In this way, it will prepare the ground for future work.*

■ *Africa will be considered as a totality. The aim will be to show the historical relationships between the various parts of the continent, too frequently subdivided in works published to date. Africa's historical connexions with the other continents should receive due attention, these connexions being analysed in terms of mutual exchanges and multilateral influences, bringing out, in its appropriate light, Africa's contribution to the development of mankind.*

■ *The* ***General History of Africa*** *will be, in particular, a history of ideas and civilizations, societies and institutions. It will introduce the values of oral tradition as well as the multiple forms of African art.*

■ *The* ***History*** *will be viewed essentially from the inside. Although a scholarly work, it will also be, in large measure, a faithful reflection of the way in which African authors view their own civilization. While prepared in an international framework and drawing to the full on the present stock of scientific knowledge, it will also be a vitally important element in the recognition of the African cultural heritage...*

Volume I, ***Methodology and African Prehistory,*** *and Volume II,* ***Ancient Civilizations of Africa,*** *have already been published (see the* ***Unesco Courier,*** *August-September 1979). Volume IV,* ***Africa from the Twelfth to the Sixteenth Century,*** *and Volume VII,* ***Africa under Colonial Domination,*** *are to be published this year. In this issue of the* ***Unesco Courier*** *we publish extracts from these two volumes. The extracts from Volume IV throw new light on the ancient civilizations of west and southern Africa. Those from Volume VII reveal the extent of the African resistance to the colonial invaders, until now concealed by what might almost be described as a conspiracy of silence. Our readers will find faithfully reflected in them the true face of a great and hitherto largely misrepresented continent—Africa.*

Africa from the twelfth to the sixteenth century

4 **Four centuries of growth and splendour**
by Djibril Tamsir Niane

5 **Ife-Benin: two kingdoms, one culture**
by Alan Ryder

8 **The secrets of Zimbabwe**
by Brian Fagan

11 **Trade links from Europe to Cathay**

12 **West Africa's oldest metropolis**

Africa under foreign domination, 1880-1935

14 **The colonial challenge**
by Albert Adu Boahen

17 **The scramble for territory**
by Godfrey N. Uzoigwe

23 **An unequal combat**
by Godfrey N. Uzoigwe

A continent resists

26 **North Africa: the long struggle**
by Abdallah Laroui

27 **West Africa: the fight for survival**
by M'Baye Gueye and Albert Adu Boahen

30 **East Africa: diplomacy and defiance**
by Henry Mwanzi

32 **The colonial heritage**
by Albert Adu Boahen

2 **A time to live...**
Caribbean: Black Shack Alley

Terracotta head (height 17.4 cm) from Owo, a town in southwest Nigeria, is modelled in classical Ife style. It has been suggested that Owo art formed a bridge between the arts of the two great centres of Ife and Benin.

Photo taken from *Nigeria, its Archaeology and Early History* © Th. Shaw 1978. National Museum of Lagos

Four centuries of growth and splendour

by Djibril Tamsir Niane

THE period from the twelfth to the sixteenth century was a key period in the historical evolution of Africa. These four centuries saw the rise and development in Africa of brilliant civilizations. In the north and on the eastern coasts of the continent, under the banner of Islam, merchant cities sprang up which made of Africa one of the major crossroads of world trade. Huge caravans crossed the Sahara linking the north with the Sudan, the "Land of the Black Peoples", and with the gold mines of Ghana and Mali.

Commerce was at its most intense and trade in goods of all kinds linked the various regions of the continent. Archaeology has today revealed that even the equatorial forests were not an impenetrable barrier to the circulation of men, ideas, techniques, goods and foodstuffs.

Historians and researchers have long attributed to Islam the birth and development of the continent's cities, kingdoms and empires. But far from the Islamic zone of influence, on the Atlantic coast and in southern Africa, kingdoms and cities arose that were just as advanced and well organized as those of the Sudanese region. Among them were the brilliant civilizations of Ife and Benin which reached their apogee from the twelfth to the fourteenth century and whose statuary art constituted a heritage of striking originality. Thanks to archaeology, the civilization of Zimbabwe, the ancient empire of Monomotapa, is also gradually yielding up its secrets. Today we know that permanent contacts between west Africa and the Maghreb, Zimbabwe and the east coast were maintained by pilgrims, travelling traders and commercial interchange. Our knowledge of this important period in African history is based on written documents, oral tradition and, more and more, the findings of archaeological research. ■

Giri from Lagos, the capital of Nigeria.

Photo Bruno Barbey © Magnum, Paris

On pages 5 to 11 we present extracts from two chapters of Volume IV, **Africa from the Twelfth to the Sixteenth Century,** *of Unesco's* **General History of Africa,** *as well as a glimpse of a third chapter which examines the role of Africa in the intercontinental exchanges of the period. Professor D.T. Niane is the general editor of volume IV, the English edition of which is to be published later this year in a joint co-edition between Unesco and Heinemann, London, and University of California Press. (See inside back cover).*

Ife-Benin: two kingdoms, one culture

by Alan Ryder

Still considered by the Yoruba people as a holy city, Ife, in the Oyo province of present-day Nigeria, was from the eleventh century the capital of a flourishing civilization. By the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, Ife artists were producing their famous terracotta heads and fine bronzes made by the cire perdue (lost wax) process. This technique was transmitted to the Kingdom of Benin which began to prosper in the thirteenth century and where bronze art of the highest order flourished for five centuries.

CONSIDERING the central place it occupies in the general history of the Yoruba, we know surprisingly little about the history of Ife. After the comparative wealth of detail attached to the legendary founder of the State, Oduduwa, and his immediate successors, we encounter a very spare and broken narrative in the oral traditions for subsequent ages. The archaeological record has done something to fill the gaps, but this research is in its infancy.

A first phase in the history of the State, opening around the eleventh century, is characterized by a scattered settlement pattern, the widespread use of floors made of potsherds set on edge, a glass-bead industry and a very fine terracotta art which specialized in the production of naturalistic figures, especially human heads. Because of this latter feature, a link has sometimes been posited between the cultures of Ife and Nok, despite the thousand years which stand between them.

More significant is the very close resemblance which the terracotta art of Ife bears to that discovered in other centres of Yoruba culture. Heads in a style related to that of Ife have been found at Ikinrun and Ire near Oshogbo, at Idanre near Ikare, and most recently and interestingly at Owo, where a large number of terracotta sculptures have been excavated in a fifteenth-century context.

This wide distribution of the style may indicate the extent of Ife influence, but it may also be that it marks the spread of a cultural trait among the Yoruba associated with religious rites rather than with Ife kingship.

The potsherd floors, which in Ife have often been discovered in association with terracotta figures, are likewise not a unique feature of that city; similar floors have been found at Owo, Ifaki, Ikerin, Ede, Itaji Ekiti, Ikare and much further afield at Ketu and Dassa Zoume in the Republic of Benin and in the Kabrais district of Togo.

The earliest potsherd floors so far discovered in Ife date to about 1100 AD and the latest bear maize-cob impressions, which means that they cannot be earlier than the sixteenth century. The subsequent disappearance of the floors, and apparently also of the terracotta art, probably reflects some catastrophe which overwhelmed Ife in the sixteenth century.

The twenty-five Ife "bronze" heads (they are in fact made of brass and copper), which bear so striking a stylistic resemblance to the terracottas, may have been made in the years immediately before the disaster, when imports of brass and copper by the Portuguese had made casting metal relatively plentiful. We can at present only surmise the nature of the events which destroyed this culture; conquest by an alien dynasty seems the most likely explanation.

If the above interpretation of Ife history is correct, the dynasty which now reigns there is that which established itself in the sixteenth century, built the palace on its present site and threw up the earliest of the walls around the central area of the town. Perhaps the new dynasty has preserved some of the political and social institutions of its predecessor, but we cannot assume that the earlier regime resembled the later in its political arrangements any more than it did in its art. Because the modern pattern of installation ceremonies and royal insignia ▶

Photo Marc and Evelyne Bernheim © Rapho, Paris

Nok art (900 BC-200 AD) is the most ancient of known Nigerian art. It is named after the small village in the region of Zaria, central Nigeria, where the first sculpture of this type was discovered in 1943. Once thought to have been confined to the Bauchi plateaux, the Nok civilization is now believed to have covered a far wider area. A natural link stretching across a millennium joins these sculptures to the terracotta art of Ife, to the southwest, which flourished between the 12th and the 15th century AD. Left, Nok terracotta head (height 19.5 cm) is now in the National Museum, Jos.

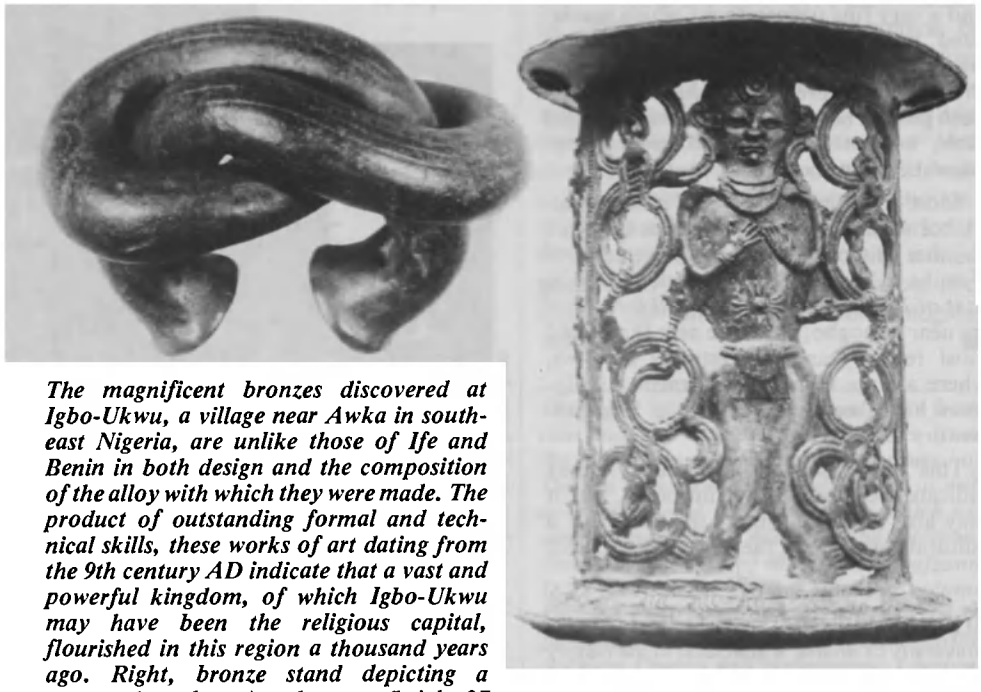
ALAN RYDER, *of the UK, is a professor at the University of Bristol. A specialist in the history of west Africa, he has published many works on the pre-colonial and colonial periods of this region.*

Photo © Musée de l'Homme, Paris

Photo © Frobenius Institutes, Frankfurt-am-Main, Fed. Rep. of Germany

Photo © André Held, Ecublens, Switzerland

Whether executed in terracotta, stone or bronze, the sculptures of Ife mark a high point in the art of portraiture (12th-15th century). Both realistic and idealized, Ife heads are outstanding for their nobility of expression and the delicacy of their carving. The head, top right, was discovered by the German anthropologist Leo Frobenius, who revealed Ife sculpture to the world in 1910. As so often in Ife art the face is scored with lengthwise scarifications. Produced by the lost wax method, Ife bronzes display a high degree of technical accomplishment. Above, representation of the oni *("king", still considered a "father" by the Yoruba people) and his queen. Above right, seated figure (height 53.7 cm) cast in the Ife tradition is a masterpiece of bronze sculpture from black Africa. This highly naturalistic effigy from Tada on the river Niger may represent the hero Tsoede, who influences the fertility of the people and their crops.*



The magnificent bronzes discovered at Igbo-Ukwu, a village near Awka in south-east Nigeria, are unlike those of Ife and Benin in both design and the composition of the alloy with which they were made. The product of outstanding formal and technical skills, these works of art dating from the 9th century AD indicate that a vast and powerful kingdom, of which Igbo-Ukwu may have been the religious capital, flourished in this region a thousand years ago. Right, bronze stand depicting a woman (not shown) and a man (height 27 cm). Above, bronze bracelet.

Photos taken from *Igbo-Ukwu* © Th. Shaw, 1970

▶ are so similar throughout most of Yorubaland, including Ife, and because these insignia bear little resemblance to those worn by supposedly royal figures in the earlier phase of Ife history, it is reasonable to conclude that modern Yoruba kingship derives from the later phase, even though States may originally have been formed on the pattern of early Ife.

It is not impossible that the rise and fall of States in the western Sudan in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries had a direct influence on State formation in the Guinea forest zone. Their appearance and expansion may well help to account for the upheavals which happened about that time in the adjacent southern States. We know that the Nupe drove the Yoruba from Old Oyo early in the sixteenth century, and that, before they returned to their capital three-quarters of a century later, the Oyo had reorganized their military forces so as to give greater prominence to the cavalry, the striking force of armies in the savannah States. From the Nupe the Oyo borrowed the *Egungun* cult of ancestors, and certain features of their revivified State may have come from the same source.

Benin was the first State that the Portuguese visited on the coast; they soon established diplomatic as well as trade relations. Situated south-west of Ife, Benin probably became a kingdom early on, perhaps in the twelfth century.

In the fifteenth century a major upheaval transformed this limited monarchy into an autocracy and the small State into a large kingdom. Tradition attributes the changes to a ruler known as Ewuare, who acquired the throne by ousting and killing a younger brother; in the course of the struggle much of the capital is said to have been destroyed.

Ewuare rebuilt his capital to a new plan and gave it the name of Edo, which it has borne to this day. In the centre of the city a huge ditch and rampart were thrown up, cutting across older structures as did the city wall of Ife. Within the rampart a broad avenue separated the palace from the "town"—the quarters which housed numerous guilds of craftsmen and ritual specialists who served the ruler. The palace itself was organized into three departments—the wardrobe, the ruler's personal attendants and the harem—each with a staff graded into three ranks analogous to the age grades of the Edo villages.

Archaeology has confirmed the traditions which assign the construction of the great wall of Ewuare and a major rebuilding of the palace to the fifteenth century. It has also shed light on the developments of the renowned Benin art of *cire perdue* (lost-wax) casting in brass and bronze. All brass objects found in a pre-sixteenth-century context prove to have been made by a smithing not a casting process. Although the *cire perdue* technique may have been known at an earlier date, it would seem, both from the archaeological evidence and from a stylistic study of the very large body of Benin brasswork still in existence, that only in the sixteenth century, with the import of large quantities of European brass, did this art become important.

In general, wood sculpture dominates black African art. The Ife-Benin civilization is the brilliant exception, in that one finds works of art in terracotta and in bronze which accounts for the particular importance of this region in the general evolution of black African art.

Photo © Werner Forman Archive, London

In the court art of Benin, many bronze artefacts are dedicated to the greater glory of the* oba *(king). Benin figures, despite a certain naturalism, are usually highly stylized. This flautist or trumpet-player (c. 1600; height 62.5 cm) belonged to the* oba's *court.

We noted earlier that objects in brass were either forged or made by the *cire perdue* technique, which was known at Ife probably earlier than the thirteenth century. In the light of the most recent research, a natural link unites the terracotta art illustrated by naturalistic figurines, particularly human heads, with the culture of Nok, which goes back to the Iron Age (the fifth century before the Christian era). This is most important and underlines the widespread diffusion of the Nok culture; moreover, we have evidence of exchanges and continuing contacts between the countries of the savannah and those of the forest to the south. Thus the well-known bronzes and naturalistic brass of Ife and Benin are the culmination of an artistic evolution begun at least as early as the Iron Age in a vast cultural region.

This seems to be confirmed by the discovery in 1939, in the east of Nigeria, of the site of Igbo-Ukwu, which was explored in 1959 by Professor Thurstan Shaw; some 800 bronze pieces have been brought to light which are completely different from the Ife-Benin bronzes. Igbo-Ukwu is an urban complex in the middle of which were the palace and temples. Different buildings have been uncovered: a great room where plates and objects of worship and treasures were stored; a burial chamber of a great priest, richly decorated; and an enormous hole in which were deposited pottery, bones and other objects.

Certainly there are some differences between the bronzes discovered at Igbo-Ukwu and the works of art of Ife. Nevertheless, a number of shared traits show that the two centres were part of the same culture. Indeed, we are in the presence, as at Ife, of a ritual monarchy.

It is believed that Igbo-Ukwu was the religious capital of a very vast kingdom, and that the treasures were stored there under the keeping of a priest-king, Ezi Nzi. Information is lacking on the culture of Igbo-Ukwu; inquiries among those who guard oral tradition are continuing, and archaeologists see an extension of the area of bronze manufacture. Nevertheless, Igbo-Ukwu appears to contradict much of what has so far been postulated about State formation; on the evidence of radiocarbon dates, this highly sophisticated culture had evolved by the ninth century among Ibo peoples who otherwise maintained a "stateless" form of society. In other words, the Igbo-Ukwu culture antedates those of Ife and Benin, and all others of comparable complexity so far discovered in the forest region, by at least two centuries.

■ **Alan Ryder**

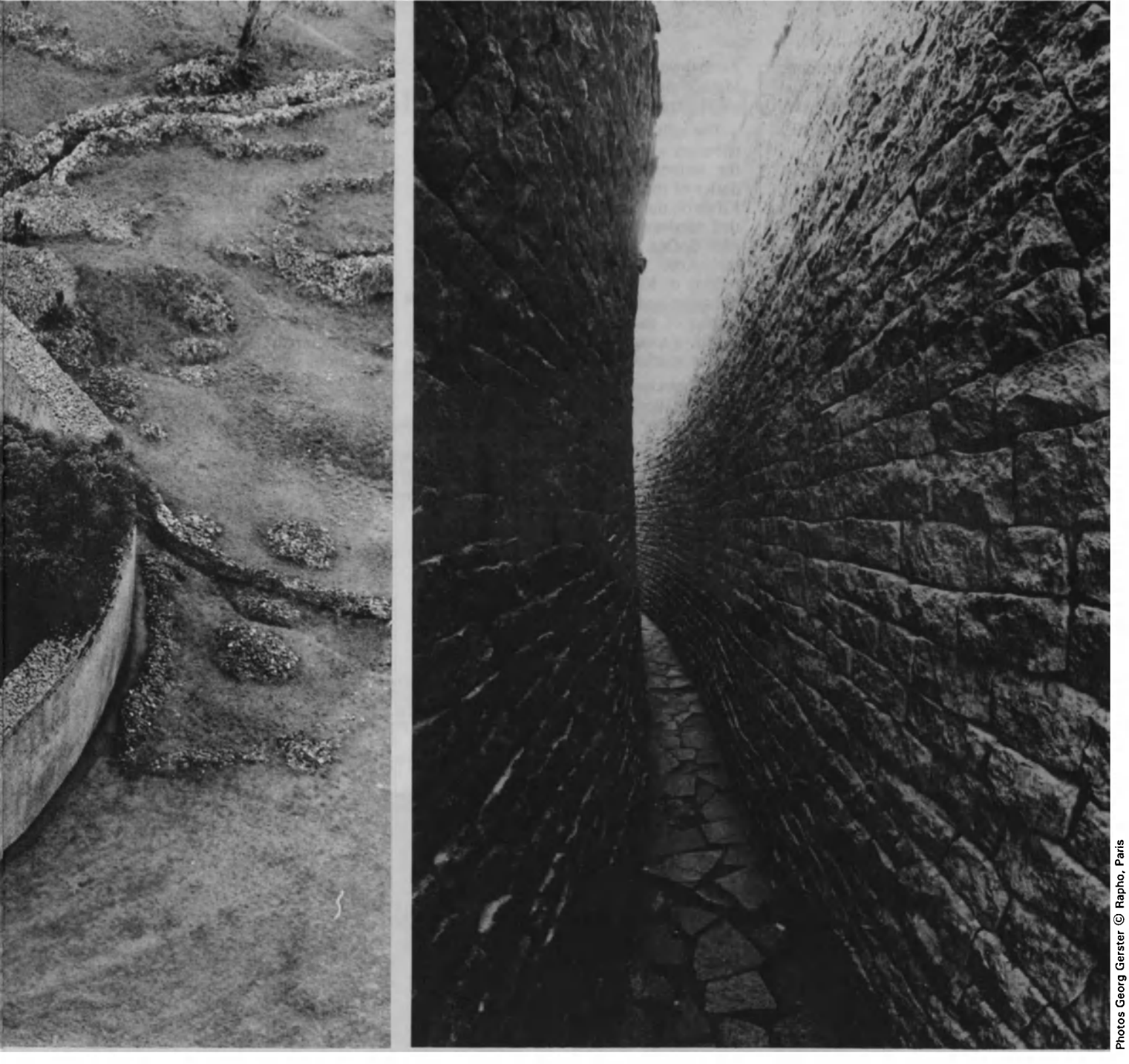
The secrets of Zimbabwe

Deep in the heart of southern Africa, away from the zones of influence of the Islamic and Christian powers, the basins of the Zambezi and Limpopo Rivers were for centuries the setting for a number of brilliant civilizations, the most famous of these being that of Great Zimbabwe. Thanks to painstaking research by archaeologists, linguists and anthropologists, the ancient city of Great Zimbabwe, with its cyclopean buildings, is gradually yielding up the secrets of its past.

WHATEVER the fundamental causes behind the rise of Great Zimbabwe, there is no doubt that it is a most impressive monument. The site is dominated by the Acropolis, a long, granite hill covered with enormous boulders. Successive generations of occupants linked the boulders together with stone walls, making small enclosures and narrow passages. The westernmost enclosure is the largest, enclosed by a thick, free-standing stone wall. It contains a long sequence of later Iron Age occupation that provides the basis for subdividing Great Zimbabwe's history into at least three stages.

The most intensive occupation began in about the eleventh century; but no stone walls were built until the thirteenth century, when the small pole-and-mud huts of earlier times were replaced by more substantial mud houses. The stone retaining wall for the western enclosure was also built at that time, as more imports appear in the deposits. It was during the thirteenth or fourteenth century, also, that the first buildings were constructed in the valley below the Acropolis.

The Great Enclosure with its massive free-standing walls was built progressively during the following century. The enclosing wall of the Great Enclosure has an average height of 7.3 metres, is 5.5 metres thick at the base and between 1.3 metres and 3.6 metres at the top. A length of 52 metres is decorated with a chevron pattern. Inside is an unfinished enclosure wall which was evidently replaced by the present one and which helps to form a narrow defile between the two walls, leading to a skilfully constructed conical tower that dominated



Photos Georg Gerster © Rapho, Paris

by Brian Fagan

South of Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe, rise the massive stone ruins of Great Zimbabwe. Settled by Iron Age peoples as early as the 10th or 11th century, by 1300 Great Zimbabwe had become the centre of a powerful and influential State. Chinese, Persian and Syrian china, glass and porcelain have been unearthed in the ruins and on other sites nearby, indicating that the Great Zimbabwe complex played an important role in the East African coastal trade which by the 14th century reached far into the interior of the continent. Above left, air view of the most spectacular ruin, the Great Enclosure, girdled by ramparts over 7 metres high. Narrow defile, above, is formed by the outer rampart and an unfinished inner wall which runs part way along it. Great Zimbabwe was built using abundant local granite. Its architecture is considered to be an extension of the enclosures and chief's quarters which in other African States were constructed from grass, mud and poles.

the Great Enclosure. The Great Enclosure itself was divided into a series of smaller enclosures, in which the foundations of substantial pole-and-mud houses are to be seen. It was presumably the dwelling place of the rulers of Great Zimbabwe, an impressive and politically highly significant structure.

Great Zimbabwe is a unique site only on account of its scale, for it is the largest of an estimated 150 ruins in the granite country that forms the Zambezi-Limpopo watershed. There are other ruins with between one and five enclosures, at least partially surrounded with free-standing walls and with mud-and-pole huts inside them, built near Zimbabwe and in Mashonaland. The regularly coursed masonry is in the Great Zimbabwe style. Those that have been excavated contain occasional gold objects, copper-wire bracelets, glass beads, and the fire pots and spindle whorls characteristic of the Great Zimbabwe culture. At the Ruanga and Chipadze ruins, cattle were important. Five of the excavated ruins have produced dates that suggest they were all built and occupied between the beginning of the fourteenth and the end of the fifteenth centuries. Some have been dated as late as the sixteenth century.

All these ruins are small, having had but a minimal population. They were normally built near hills that were a plentiful source▶

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▶of stone. Too small to be viable economic units, they were probably built by external labour from surrounding villages that were able to support themselves by shifting agriculture on the savannah.

At Nhunguza ruins there was a single, very large hut, divided into three rooms. One of the rooms was large enough to hold a large number of people, a second contained a single seat, a third was a "completely secluded room that must have contained objects of special value including... what must have been a monolith set in a grooved stone platform". This unusual structure may well have been the location where a prominent religious authority held sway, an authority that was not only the reason for the building of the isolated enclosure, but also the human cement that held together the Great Zimbabwe State.

One has a sense of an extremely strong and unquestioned political and religious authority whose hold over the scattered rural population was based on some form of unifying faith in the powers of the divine *Mwari* or some other religious catalyst that reached out to every family.

The borders of the Great Zimbabwe State are still ill-defined, although its heartland was in central Mashonaland. Some Great Zimbabwe-style ruins occur in what is now Matabeleland, where Great Zimbabwe people infiltrated Leopard's Kopje territory.

The influence of Great Zimbabwe and its tributary settlements were felt far outside the immediate, relatively limited boundaries of the State itself. The prosperity of Kilwa on the East African coast was closely tied to the fluctuations in the gold trade with Sofala. Already in the tenth century the Arab geographer al-Mas'udi was writing of Kilwa and the gold trade. Four centuries later Ibn Battuta described Kilwa as one of the most beautiful cities in the world, a town whose prosperity depended on the southern gold trade.

Without question the wealth of the rulers of Great Zimbabwe waxed and waned with the fortunes of the coastal trade. Kilwa itself went through commercial vicissitudes, reaching the height of its prosperity in the fifteenth century with the reconstruction of the famous Great Mosque and its elaborate domed and vaulted roof. But a century later Kilwa, the east African coast and Great Zimbabwe itself had all declined. By the time the Portuguese arrived at Sofala the coastal trade was but a shadow of its former self. For all its isolation, Great Zimbabwe's trading connexions and the gold within its borders contributed not only to prosperity and economic growth on the east African coast, but also in much remoter lands as well.

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, however, there was considerable trading activity in northern Mashonaland and the Zambezi valley, which is reflected in some remarkable archaeological discoveries. This region was settled during the Early Iron Age, which survived until the end of the first millennium. Between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries northern Mashonaland was occupied by the makers of Musengezi ware, subsistence farmers with minimal trading contacts, thought to be Shona speakers. Their culture is a far cry from the wealth of their southern neighbours at Great Zimbabwe, although more trade goods occur in later Musengezi settlements.

But the same is certainly not true of the extreme north-western corner of Mashonaland and the lower part of the middle Zambezi valley, where large settlements and the working and trading of copper assumed great importance. The Chedzurgwe site in the fertile Urungwe district covered over 24 hectares of fine grassland; abundant cattle and game bones testify to the importance of pastoralism and hunting. But copper and iron-working was of considerable significance, both ores being abundant nearby. Copper was made into standardized ingots of two fixed weights; wire bracelets made from copper and tin alloy were commonplace. Textiles were also in use, and extremely fine pottery was made, with a finish and delicacy of decoration on shallow bowls and beakers that is almost unparalleled elsewhere.

■ **Brian Fagan**

Photo Charles Lénars © Atlas Photo, Paris

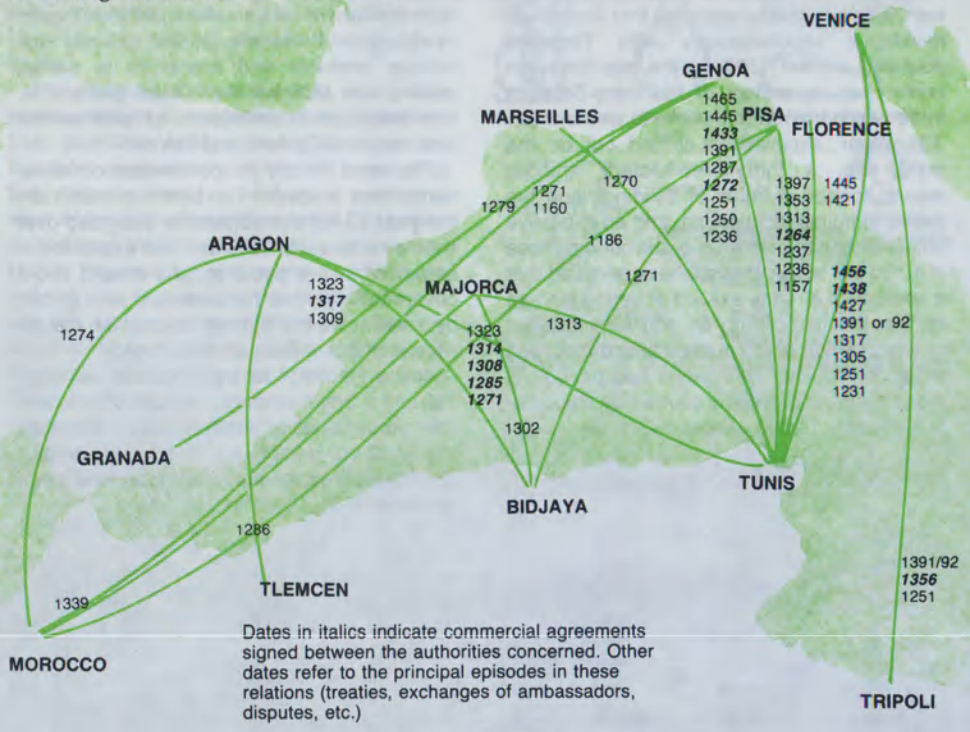
The ruins of the great enclosure at Great Zimbabwe (see previous page) are dominated by a massive Acropolis, a hilltop stronghold integrated into a natural mass of giant rocks. Left, entrance to a narrow covered passage in the Acropolis.

Photo taken from *Great Zimbabwe* by P.S. Garlake © Thames and Hudson

The bird depicted in this soapstone sculpture unearthed in ruins in the valley of Great Zimbabwe is today the national symbol of the State of Zimbabwe.

Trade links from Europe to Cathay

Economic relations between places bordering the western Mediterranean



Dates in italics indicate commercial agreements signed between the authorities concerned. Other dates refer to the principal episodes in these relations (treaties, exchanges of ambassadors, disputes, etc.)

Source: Jean Devisse

From the twelfth to the sixteenth century, Africa played a major role in intercontinental relations, particularly in the Mediterranean region and, via the Indian Ocean, with Asia.

The Mediterranean. Although there was some trade in such products as nuts, pepper and ivory, it was through the gold and slaves torn from its bosom that the African presence became most clearly visible in the Mediterranean economy. As early as the end of the tenth century, Spanish Christians had begun to obtain gold from the south and gold continued to flow towards north Africa until the end of the fifteenth century. From the thirteenth century onwards the profits accumulated. An active merchant class came into being in the great Christian ports of the Mediterranean and in certain large cities such as Milan and Florence. The "thirst for gold" in an expanding Western economy was to accelerate the search for the gold routes to the interior of the African continent and it is reasonable to assume that a by no means negligible proportion of African gold found its way into the European commercial circuit.

Photo © Pierre Colombel, Paris

It is known from Chinese sources that in 628, under the T'ang dynasty, official envoys from Black Africa arrived in China with perfumes and ivory. They are depicted in frescoes in the decorated grottoes (5th to 10th century) of Dunhuang, in Kansu province, one of the masterpieces of Buddhist art. Among the personages portrayed in this mural, evoking the "Lamentation for Buddha in Nirvana", scholars of the Dunhuang Institute see in the dark-skinned figure with curly hair (to the right of the third row from the bottom) the imaginary representation of an African.

Asia. According to ancient historians, intense commercial activity already existed in the twelfth century on the east African coast. This trading activity expanded considerably during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Ivory, collected in the interior and much sought after for the Muslim, Chinese and Indian markets, hides, iron and gold constituted the most important export products. Gold from the south, exported through Sofala but marketed at Kilwa, assumed a dominant place in this trade.

Ships brought various products to this coast: cowrie shells, new plants, clothing and glass beads. This was mainly a coastal trade carried in ships which probably used Kilwa as their home port. Muslim ships sailed from Mombasa or Malindi to Asia every year and played an important part in developing navigation techniques which improved considerably from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century. African sailors were employed on coasters and other ships plying between Asia and Africa, at least if certain paintings on manuscripts are to be believed.

Over fifty towns, from Cape Gardafui to Sofala, demonstrated the vitality of urban development in the Swahili zone, even before the arrival of the Arabs. One of the most prosperous of these towns was Kilwa whose four- and five-storey houses are described by fifteenth-century Chinese sources.

The Chinese visited this coast of Africa in force during the fifteenth century. There is evidence too of the arrival of Africans in China, possibly as early as the sixth or seventh century. Paintings of the T'ang era show Black Africans in Buddhist grottoes and a thirteenth-century compilation probably refers to Swahili country. As early as 1402, a Korean map gave an approximately correct outline of southern Africa. In addition to the slave trade, Chinese sources mention four major articles exported from east Africa: gold, amber, yellow sandalwood and ivory. ■

West Africa's

THE results of archaeological excavations carried out in 1977 and 1981 on an ancient site near the city of Jenné, in Mali, have contradicted previous assumptions about the history of west Africa by pushing back the date of the emergence of this city which became one of the region's most prosperous trading centres, by almost a thousand years.

The archaeological site of Jenné-jeno ("ancient Jenné" in the local Songhay language) lies three kilometres south of the modern city of Jenné, on a floodplain of the inland Niger Delta rich in fish, cereals (especially rice and millet), and livestock.

Food has for centuries been produced in abundance in the hinterland, supplying the population of Timbuktu further north, to which Jenné is linked by 500 kilometres of navigable riverway. The gold trade route originating in the forested region of West Africa passed through the two cities and then crossed the Sahara to north Africa.

Until the excavations, directed by two American archaeologists, husband-and-wife Roderick J. McIntosh and Susan Keech McIntosh, it was generally accepted that Jenné had developed simultaneously with Timbuktu (founded around 1100) in the mid-thirteenth century as an artifact of the trans-Saharan trade which brought urbanism to west Africa.

However, excavations carried out on the main site, a thirty-three-hectare artificial mound formed of ruins of buildings and the debris of human occupation, and an extensive reconnaissance of sites in a surrounding area of 1,100 square kilometres, have revealed that a settlement already existed at Jenné-jeno as early as the third century BC and was inhabited by a population which made iron and practised trade. By 800 AD Jenné-jeno had become a prosperous cosmopolitan centre with a population of some 10,000 people.

In the course of the centuries the city's trade expanded and diversified. Jenné-jeno imported from far away stone, iron ore, copper from the Sahara and, around 600-800 AD, gold. In return for these goods, the rich city had various products and foodstuffs to barter, notably rice (African rice, *Oryza glaberrima,* was cultivated at Jenné-jeno as early as the first century AD), fish, and fish oil.

The key to the city's success was a combination of food production and craftsmanship. By the year 50 AD the settlement extended over twelve hectares. In 300 AD it had expanded to some twenty-five hectares, and around 750 it covered thirty-three hectares and was girded by a wall some two kilometres long, 3.6 metres wide and four metres or more high.

At the height of its development, between 750 and 1150, it is thought that Jenné-jeno and its nearby satellite villages may have had almost 20,000 inhabitants, and that the density of settlement in its hinterland may have been ten times higher than today.

oldest metropolis

The city's decline is thought to have begun around 1200. The fact that it was abandoned around 1400 for the site of present-day Jenné may perhaps be explained by the desire of a new Muslim trading élite to change their capital.

The discoveries at Jenné-jeno, along with others such as the eighth-century "bronzes" from Igbo-Ukwu in Nigeria open up major new historical perspectives. It is now known that long-distance trade and urbanism existed in west Africa in the first millennium AD. It is also established that Jenné-jeno played a central role in the creation of the great trade-routes between the Sahara and the Niger Bend and was not, as was previously believed, a later offshoot of the trans-Saharan salt and gold trade. The early urban settlements of the inland Niger Delta are thus seen to rank among the world's great known civilizations. ■

Chart © National Geographic Magazine, Washington, D.C.

Close-packed buildings of modern Jenné (centre left in air photo) rise from the floodplain of the inland Niger Delta in Mali. Three kilometres away on a long elliptical mound (upper right) is the site of ancient Jenné ("Jenné-jeno"). Left, some of the objects which have been unearthed by archaeologists since 1977 and which chart the rise of Jenné-jeno centuries before cities were thought to exist in west Africa. Inset below, as cattle amble by, workers excavate the circular foundations of a mud-brick house.

JENNÉ-JENO

Photos Michael and Aubine Kirtley © ANA, Paris

The colonial challenge

by Albert Adu Boahen

NEVER in the history of Africa have so many changes occurred, with such speed, as during the period 1880 to 1935. Indeed, the most fundamental and most tragic of these changes took place between 1890 and 1910, the twenty-year period that saw the conquest and occupation of virtually the whole continent of Africa by the imperial powers and the establishment of the colonial system—the following twenty-five years being essentially a period of consolidation and exploitation of the system.

The pace at which this drama unfolded was astonishing. As late as 1880, in the whole of west Africa, only the island and coastal areas of Senegal, the town of Freetown and its environs, the southern parts of the Gold Coast (Ghana), the coastal areas of Abidjan in the Ivory Coast and Porto Novo in Dahomey (Benin) and the island of Lagos had come under the direct rule of Europeans. In northern Africa, only Algeria had by then been colonized by the French. Not an inch of eastern Africa had come under European control, while in central Africa only the coastal stretches of Mozambique and Angola were subject to Portuguese rule.

It was only in south Africa that foreign rule had not only been firmly implanted but also extended a considerable distance inland. In short, in 1880, some 80 per cent of the continent of Africa was still being ruled by her own kings, queens and clan and lineage chiefs, in empires, kingdoms, communities and political units of every size and kind.

Within the next thirty years, however, this situation underwent a dramatic change. By 1914, the whole of Africa, with the exception of Ethiopia and Liberia, was subject to the rule of European powers.

What was the attitude of the Africans themselves to the establishment of colonialism? The answer is quite clear and unequivocal; the overwhelming majority of African leaders and authorities were vehemently opposed to this change and expressed their determination to retain their sovereignty and independence.

In the face of the French invasion of his territory in 1883 and their demand for permission to build a railway across his territory Lat Dior, the Damel of Cayor in modern Senegal, wrote to the French Government:

"As long as I live, be well assured, I shall oppose with all my might the construction of this railway... That is why, every time I receive a letter from you concerning the railway, I will always answer No, No, and I will never make you any other reply. Even were I to go to my rest, my horse Malaw would give you the same answer."

In 1890, King Machemba of the Yao in Tanganyika (United Republic of Tanzania) told the German commander Hermann von Wissman:

"I have listened to your words but can find no reason why I should obey you — I would rather die first... If it should be friendship that you desire, then I am ready for it, today and always; but to be your subject, that I cannot be... If it should be war you desire, then I am ready, but never to be your subject... I do not fall at your feet, for you are God's creature just as I am. I am Sultan here in my land. You are Sultan there in yours. Yet, listen, I do not say to you that you should obey me, for I know that you are a free man... As for me, I will

Africa on the eve of partition and conquest by 1880

Map © All Rights Reserved

The remaining pages of this issue of the **Unesco Courier** *are devoted to extracts from six chapters of Volume VII,* **Africa under Colonial Domination, 1880-1935,** *of Unesco's* **General History of Africa.** *The English edition of Volume VII, of which Professor A. Adu Boahen is the general editor, is to be published later this year in a joint co-edition between Unesco and Heinemann, London and University of California Press.*

domination, 1880-1935

not come to you and, if you are strong enough, then come and fetch me."

Hendrik Wittboi, a king in south west Africa, told the Germans in 1894:

"The Lord has established various kingdoms in the world, therefore I know and believe that it is no sin or crime that I should wish to remain the independent chief of my land and people."

Makombe Hanga, of Mozambique, also told a white visitor in 1895:

"I see how you white men advance more and more in Africa; on all sides of my country companies are at work. My country will also have to take up these reforms and I am quite prepared to open it up... I should like to have good roads and railways, but I will always remain the Makombe my fathers have been."

In 1895, Wobogo, the King of the Mossi, told the French Captain Destenave:

"I know the Whites wish to kill me in order to take my country, and yet you claim they will help me organize my country. But I find my country good just as it is. I have no need of them. I know what is necessary for me and what I want. I have my own merchants. Consider yourself fortunate that I do not order your head to be cut off. Go away now and, above all, never come back."

Most fascinating of all was the moving appeal addressed by Menelik II of Ethiopia to Queen Victoria in April 1891. In his appeal, Menelik first declared his intention of re-establishing the former boundaries of Ethiopia and then continued:

"I have no intention at all of being an indifferent spectator, if the distant Powers hold the idea of dividing up Africa, Ethiopia having been for the past fourteen centuries an island of Christians in a sea of pagans. Since the All-Powerful has protected Ethiopia up until now, I am hopeful that He will keep and enlarge it also in the future, and I do not think for a moment that He will divide Ethiopia among the other Powers. Formerly the boundary of Ethiopia was the sea. Failing the use of force and failing the aid of the Christians, our boundary on the sea fell into the hands of the Muslims. Today we do not pretend to be able to recover our sea coast by force, but we hope that the Christian Powers, advised by our Saviour, Jesus Christ, will restore our sea coast boundary to us, or that they will give us at least a few points along the coast."

When, in spite of this appeal, the Italians launched their campaign against Ethiopia with the connivance of Britain and France, Menelik again issued a mobilization proclamation in September 1895 in which he stated:

"Enemies have now come upon us to ruin our country and to change our religion... Our enemies have begun the affair by advancing and digging into the country like moles. With the help of God I will not deliver up my country to them... Today, you who are strong, give me of your strength, and you who are weak, help me by prayer."

It is clear from all these quotations that these rulers were confident of their preparedness to face the European invaders, and well they might have been. Many of them had been able to build up huge empires only a decade or two earlier and some were still in the process of expanding or reviving their kingdoms. Some of them had been able to defend their territories with their well-tried old weapons and traditional tactics, while others, like Samori of the Mandingo Empire and ▶

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From Roland Olivier & J. D. Fage, *A Short History of Africa*

Photo © Harlingue Viollet, Paris

Born in 1844, at Ankober in central Ethiopia, Menelik II was one of the greatest of Ethiopia's rulers and the most successful of the leaders of African resistance to the colonial invaders. In 1865 he became king of Shewa and in 1889 assumed the imperial crown. As king, and later as emperor, he incorporated large areas of southern Ethiopia into his domains and undertook a vast programme of modernization. He had the foresight to equip his army with modern weapons and this enabled him to resist invasion by the Italians whom he defeated decisively in 1896 at the battle of Adowa, one of the great battles in the history of Africa. He died in December 1913, having succeeded in maintaining his country's integrity and independence in face of the onslaught of European colonialism.

▶ Menelik of Ethiopia, had even managed to modernize their armies. Furthermore, some thought they could hold off invaders by diplomacy.

It is also clear from some of the quotations above that many African rulers welcomed the changes that had been steadily introduced since the third decade of the nineteenth century for hitherto they had posed no threat to their sovereignty and independence. In west Africa, for instance, thanks to the activities of the missionaries, Fourah Bay College had been founded as early as 1826, while elementary schools and a secondary school had been established by the 1870s in both the Gold Coast and Nigeria. As early as 1887 wealthy Africans had even begun sending their children to Europe for further education and professional training.

As far as the Africans were concerned, then, they did not see the need for any radical change in their centuries-old relations with Europe, and they were confident that, if the Europeans wanted to force change upon them and push their way inland, they would be able to stop them as they had been able to do in the past.

What the Africans did not realize, however, was that, by 1880, thanks to the industrial revolution in Europe and the subsequent technological progress represented by the steamship, the railway, the telegraph and, above all, the Maxim gun, the old era of free trade and informal political control had given way to what Basil Davidson has described as "the era of the new imperialism and rival capitalist monopolies". It was not only trade that the Europeans now wanted, but also direct political control.

Secondly, the African leaders failed to realize that their muzzle-loading muskets were totally outmoded and no match for the Europeans' breech-loading rifles.

The consequences were tragic. All the chiefs quoted above except one were defeated. Only Menelik succeeded in defeating the Italian invaders and retaining his sovereignty and independence.

■ **Albert Adu Boahen**

The scramble for territory

by Godfrey N. Uzoigwe

ALTHOUGH by the end of the third quarter of the nineteenth century France, Britain, Portugal and Germany had acquired commercial interests and were exercising considerable influence in different parts of Africa, their direct political control in the continent was extremely limited.

Britain, in particular, and Germany were wielding all the influence they wanted, and no statesman in his senses would choose to incur the costs and court the unforeseen contingencies of formal annexation when the same advantages could be obtained from informal control.

This attitude began to change, however, as a result of three main factors which emerged during the period 1876 to 1880.

The first was the convening by King Leopold of Belgium of the so-called Brussels Geographical Conference which resulted in the setting up of the African International Association and the employment of Henry Morton Stanley to explore the Congo in the name of the Association. These moves culminated in the creation of the Congo Free State, whose recognition by the European nations Leopold managed to obtain before the Berlin West African Conference ended its deliberations.

The second factor was a sudden flurry of Portuguese activity. Piqued by the fact that she had been invited to the Brussels Conference only as an afterthought, from 1876 onwards Portugal despatched a series of expeditions which by 1880 had resulted in the annexation to the Portuguese Crown of the hitherto virtually independent estates of the Afro-Portuguese rulers of Mozambique.

The third and final factor was the expansionist mood which characterized French colonial policy between 1879 and 1880, as signified by her participation with Britain in the dual control of Egypt (1879), the despatch of Savorgan de Brazza into the Congo and the ratification of his treaties with Chief Makoko of the Bateke, and the revival of colonial initiatives both in Tunisia and Madagascar.

These moves on the part of France and Portugal between 1876 and 1880 clearly indicated that they were now committed to colonial expansion and establishment of formal control in Africa; it was this that finally compelled both Britain and Germany to abandon informal control and influence in favour of formal control and led to their annexations in southern, eastern and western Africa from the end of 1883 onwards.

By the early 1880s, the scramble for territory was well under way and it was out of fear of being pushed out of Africa altogether that Portugal proposed the calling of an international conference to sort out territorial disputes in the area of central Africa.

The idea of an international conference to settle the territorial disputes arising from European activities in the Congo region, suggested by Portugal, was later taken up by Bismarck. The conference was held at Berlin between 15 November 1884 and 26 November 1885. The news that such a conference was to be held increased the intensity of the scramble. The conference did not seriously discuss either the slave trade or the lofty humanitarian ideals that were supposed to have inspired it. Delegates contented themselves with passing empty resolutions regarding the abolition of the slave trade and the welfare of Africans.

It was not, ostensibly, the initial intention of the conference to attempt a general partition of Africa. It nevertheless ended up disposing of territory, passing resolutions concerning the free navigation of the Niger, the Benue and their affluents, and laying down "the rules to be observed in future ▶

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Photo © Mary Evans Picture Library, London

Delegates from 15 nations at the West African Conference, convened in Berlin in November 1884, which laid down "the rules to be observed in future with regard to the occupation of territory on the coasts of Africa".

▶with regard to the occupation of territory on the coasts of Africa".

According to Article 34 of the Berlin Act, any European nation which took possession of an African coast or declared a "protectorate" there, would have to notify such action to the signatories of the Act in order to have its claims ratified. This was the so-called "sphere of influence" doctrine, to which was linked the absurd concept of the "hinterland" which came to be interpreted to mean that possession of a coast also implied ownership of its hinterland to an almost unlimited distance.

Article 35 stipulated that an occupier of such coastal possessions must also demonstrate that it possessed sufficient authority there "to protect existing rights and, as the case may be, freedom of trade and of transit under the conditions agreed upon". This was the so-called doctrine of "effective occupation" that was to make the conquest of Africa such a murderous business.

Indeed, by recognizing the Congo Free State, by permitting territorial negotiations and by laying down rules and regulations for "legal" appropriation of African territory, the Concert of Europe had arrogated to itself the right of sanctioning the principle of sharing-out and conquering another continent.

There was no precedent in world history to justify one continent boldly talking about the sharing-out and occupation of the territory of another continent. This was the major significance of the conference for African history. The argument that, contrary to popular opinion, the conference did not partition Africa is correct only in the most technical sense; in any case it is irrelevant. The appropriation of territory did take place at the conference and the question of future appropriation is clearly implied in its decisions. By 1885, in fact, the broad outlines of the final partition of Africa had already been drawn.

Prior to the Berlin Conference, spheres of influence had been acquired by settlement, exploration, the establishment of commercial posts, the occupation of strategic areas and treaties with African rulers. Following the Conference, influence by treaty became the most important method of effecting the paper partition of the continent. These treaties took two forms—those between Africans and Europeans, and bilateral agreements between the Europeans themselves. The African-European treaties were basically of two kinds. First, there were the slave trade and commercial treaties, and, secondly, there were the political treaties by which African rulers either purportedly surrendered sovereignty in return for protection or undertook not to enter into treaty obligations with other European nations.

African leaders entered into these arrangements for a variety of reasons. In some cases they hoped that the prestige of such a relationship would give them political advantages in dealing with their neighbours. An African sovereign might desire a treaty in the hope of using it to keep recalcitrant subject States in line. Sometimes a weak African State would desire a treaty with a European power in the hope of using it to renounce allegiance to an African overlord or as a means of warding off a threat to its independence from another European power.

■ **Godfrey N. Uzoigwe**

Relief from the Palace of the King of Dahomey (Benin) illustrating the superiority of European arms.

Photo © Musée de l'Homme, Paris

Colour pages

Page 19

Above: Portrait of Samori Touré by the French artist Pierre Castagnez. Samori Touré was one of the great African resistance leaders of the colonial era. As head of the Mandingo Empire he opposed the French colonial forces for a period of some seventeen years before being captured and exiled to Gabon, where he died in 1900. (See article page 27).

Photo © Lauros-Giraudon, Paris

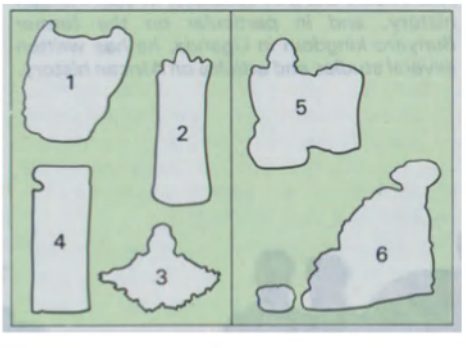
Below: An Independence Day parade in Dakar, Senegal.

Photo M. Renaudeau © Hoa-Qui, Paris

Page 20

(1) Probably fashioned between the 12th and the 15th century, this terracotta man's head (height 17.5 cm) is an example of the out standing statuary art of Ife, in the south-west of present- day Nigeria. In marked contrast to this naturalistic treatment of the human face is a highly stylized, cylindrical, terracotta figurine (2) on which only the hair (or head-dress), eyes and mouth are represented. Some 19 cm in height, it was once thought to be an example of an earlier phase in Ife art, but it probably also dates from between the 12th and the 15th century. The highly original bronze art of Igbo-Ukwu (south-east Nigeria) dates back to the 9th century. In spite of certain common features it is very different from the later bronzes of Ife-Benin, as is shown by this pendant (3) in the form of two eggs with chains, beads and bells (height 21.6 cm). The bronze plaque (4), 47 cm high, probably dates from the 16th century, a period of great fertility for the art of Benin (15th-18th century). The figure depicted in this stylized composition of head, hands and legs is thought to represent the "messenger of death". (For the art of Ife, Igbo-Ukwu, Benin, and Nok, see article page 5).

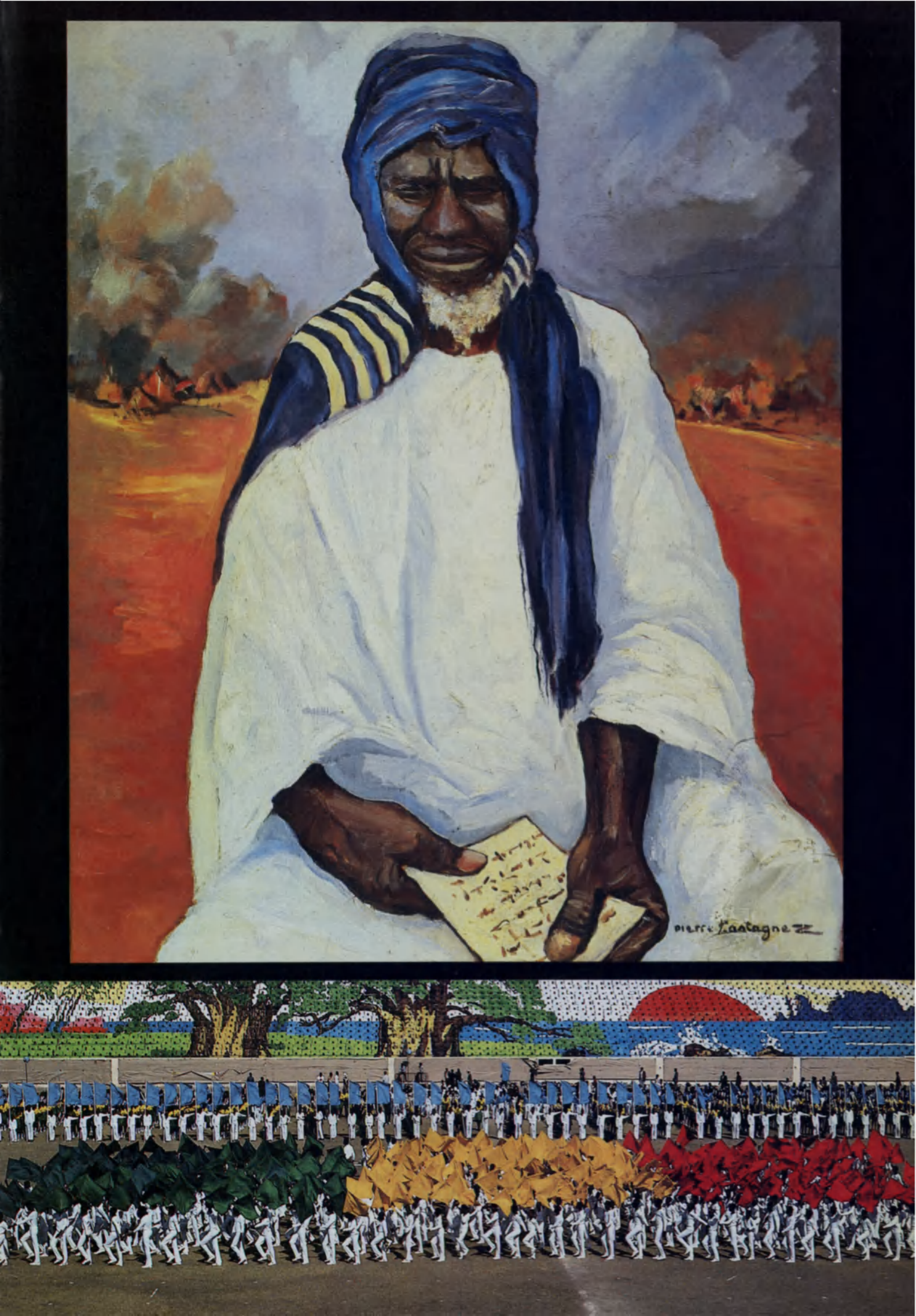
Photos © André Held, Ecublens, Switzerland



Page 21

These 3 statuettes were unearthed, along with many other objects, in recent excavations at Jenné-jeno ("ancient Jenné") in Mali. Kneeling figures (5), may have been ancestor-spirits, and (6) the magnificent androgynous figurine (32 cm high) may also have had religious significance. Serpents coil around its neck and arm. The head and torso were found together but it is not fully certain that they match. The discovery of Jenné-jeno was one of the most exciting events in recent African archaeology and investigation of the site is shedding important new light on early African history (see pages 12 and 13).

Photos Michael and Aubine Kirtley © ANA, Paris


pierre lantagne 77

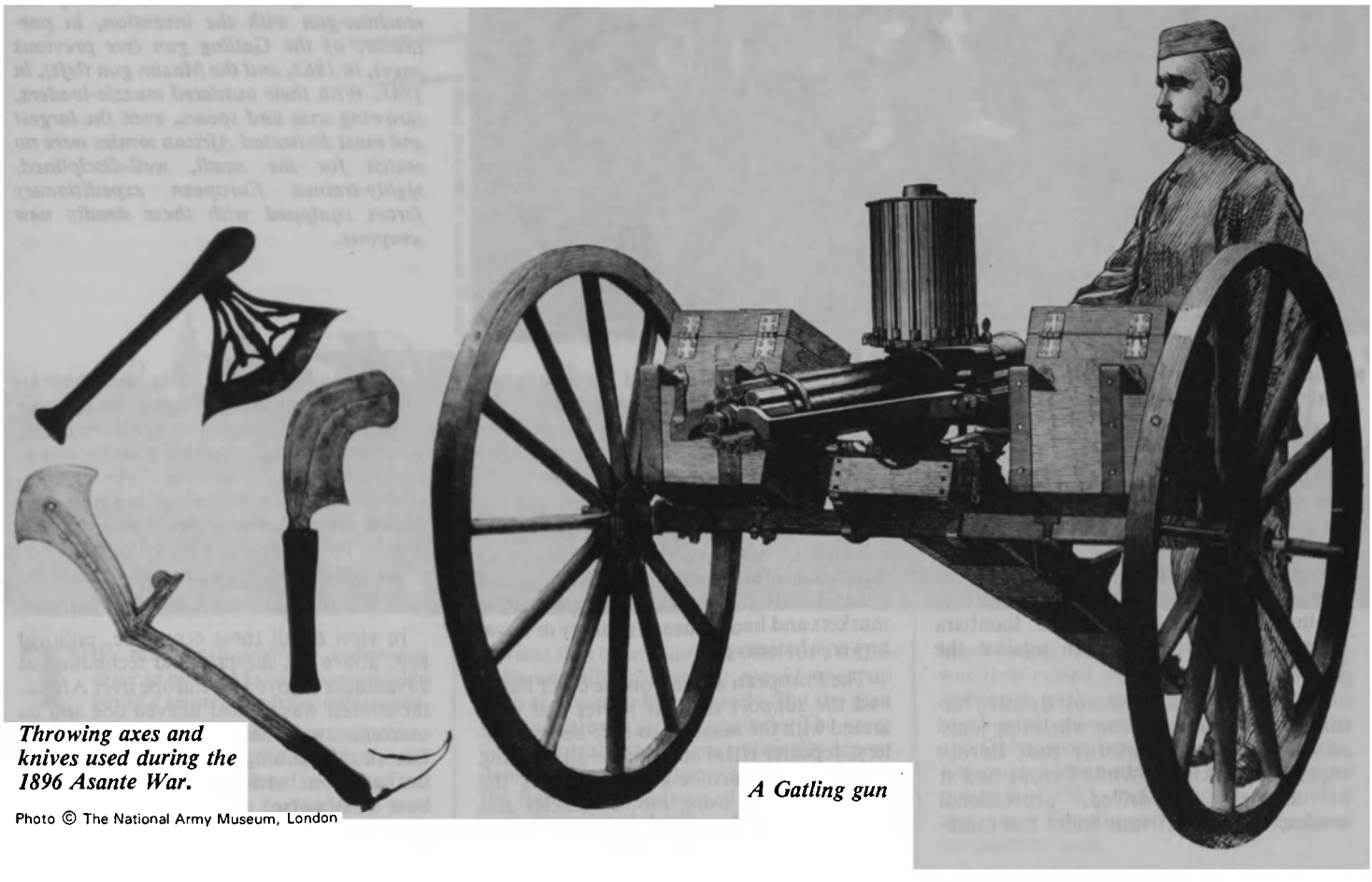
I am
part of me
You are
part of me
We are
the people
We are
the majority
We were
the silent majority
No more
no more
no no no

I'm waking

DEAD

An unequal combat

by Godfrey N. Uzoigwe



Throwing axes and knives used during the 1896 Asante War.

Photo © The National Army Museum, London

A Gatling gun

Photo © BBC Hulton Picture Library, London

THE story of the military conquest of Africa is an epic of heroic resistance against tremendous odds. It was a struggle in which, in virtually every respect, the dice were heavily loaded in favour of the European invaders.

In the first place, thanks to the activities of European explorers and missionaries, by 1880 Europeans were far more knowledgeable about Africa, its topography and resources and the strengths and weaknesses of its States and societies, than Africans were about Europe.

Secondly, owing to the revolutionary changes in medical technology, and in particular the discovery of the prophylactic use of quinine against malaria, Europeans became far less fearful of Africa than they had been before the middle of the nineteenth century.

Thirdly, the material and financial resources of Europe were overwhelming in comparison with those of Africa. Thus, while Europe could afford to spend millions of pounds on overseas campaigns, Africa could not sustain any protracted military confrontation with Europe.

Fourthly, while the period following the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-1878 was marked, according to historian J. Holland Rose, by "a state of political equilibrium which made for peace and stagnation in Europe", in Africa it was marked by inter-State and intra-State conflict and rivalry—the Mandingo against the Tukulor, the Asante against the Fante, the Baganda against the Bunyoro, the Batooro against the Bunyoro, the Mashona against the Ndebele.

Thus while Europe could focus its attention on imperial activities without any major distractions at home, African States and countries had their attention divided. Moreover, divided though the European States were on imperial and colonial issues, throughout the era of partition and right up to 1914, they always resolved these questions without resort to war, except in the single case of the conflict between the British and the Boers in south Africa.

Despite competition and crisis, therefore, the European powers involved in the partition of Africa displayed a remarkable spirit of solidarity which not only eliminated wars among them but also prevented the African rulers and communities from playing one European power off against another. Throughout this period, various European powers took on the African powers one at ▶

Colour page left

The roots of* apartheid, *South Africa's official ideology built on white supremacy and racial segregation, can be traced back through the historical record of domination practised by small white minorities over a large black majority. This collage,* Livre sur l'Afrique du Sud, *by the South African painter Gavin Jantjes, formed part of the* Artists against Apartheid *exhibition held in Paris last year and organized by the United Nations and the Committee of Artists of the World Against Apartheid.

Photo © Artists of the World Against Apartheid, Paris

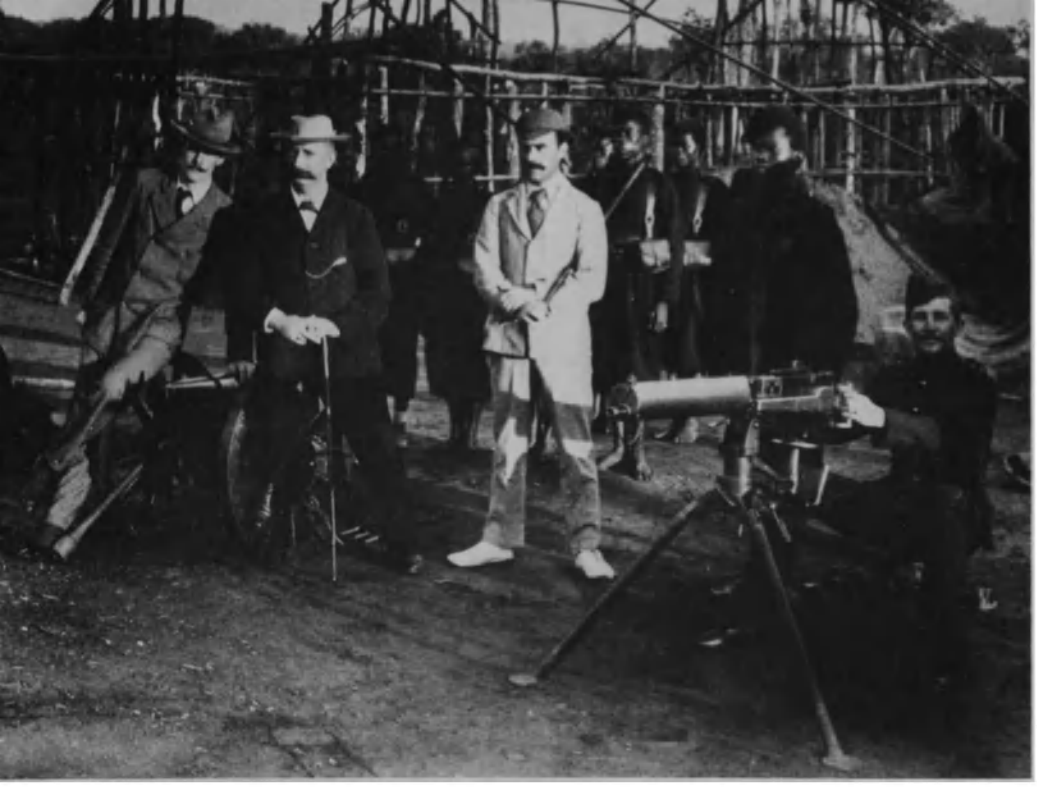


Photo © Museum of Mankind, London

The period of the colonial conquest of Africa coincided with technical advances in arms manufacture which revolutionized warfare and gave the European powers an overwhelming firepower advantage over African resistance fighters. The introduction during the second half of the 19th century of breech-loading rifles and metal-cartridge ammunition enormously increased the range, accuracy and rate of fire of the individual rifleman and signalled the end of cavalry as an effective military force. Even more striking was the evolution of the machine-gun with the invention, in particular, of the Gatling gun (see previous page), in 1862, and the Maxim gun (left), in 1883. With their outdated muzzle-loaders, throwing axes and spears, even the largest and most dedicated African armies were no match for the small, well-disciplined, highly-trained European expeditionary forces equipped with these deadly new weapons.

▶ a time and never was an African State assisted by another European country.

The behaviour of the African States, however, was marked, by and large, by lack of solidarity, unity or co-operation. Some did not hesitate to ally themselves against their neighbours, only to be vanquished later in their own turn. The Baganda allied themselves with the British against the Bunyoro and the Barotse with the British against the Ndebele while the Bambara teamed up with the French against the Tukulor.

The final and easily the most decisive factor was, of course, the overwhelming logistic and military superiority that Europe enjoyed over Africa. While Europe had at its disposal well-drilled, professional armies, very few African States had established standing armies and fewer still had professional armies. Furthermore, the Europeans could always rely on African mercenaries and levies to give them the numerical superiority they needed.

Above all, under the Brussels Convention of 1890, the imperial powers agreed not to sell arms to Africans. This meant that most African armies were armed with outmoded guns, mainly flint-locks or muzzle-loading muskets and had no heavy artillery or naval power whatsoever.

The European armies, on the other hand, had the support of their navies and were armed with the most up-to-date heavy artillery, repeater rifles and, above all, Gatling and Maxim machine-guns. Towards the end, they were using motor vehicles and even aeroplanes. It is significant that Samori and Menelik, the two African leaders who succeeded in inflicting some defeats on the Europeans, were the two who managed to obtain a certain quantity of up-to-date weapons. The overwhelming military superiority that Europe enjoyed over Africa was succinctly summed up in this couplet by the British poet Hilaire Belloc:

Whatever happens, we have got
The Maxim gun, and they have not.

In view of all these economic, political and, above all, military and technological advantages enjoyed by Europe over Africa, the contest was a most uneven one and its outcome was inevitable. Indeed, for Europe, the timing of the conquest could not have been better; for Africa it could not have been worse.

■ **Godfrey N. Uzoigwe**

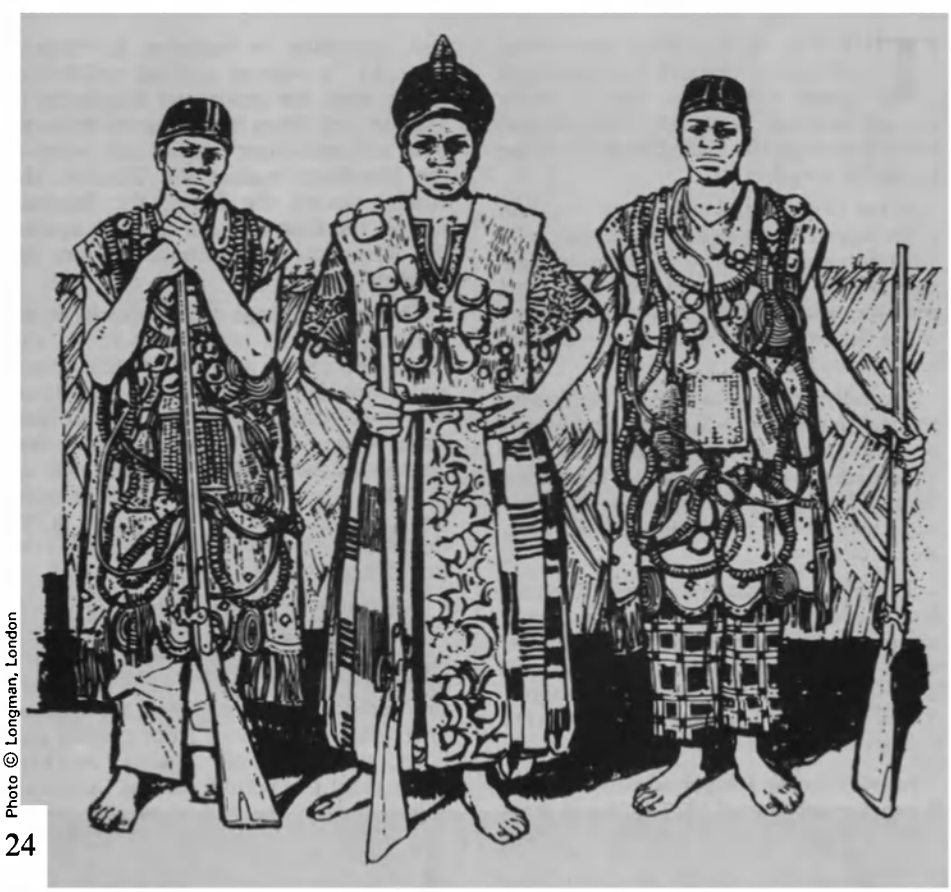


Photo © Longman, London

A 19th-century Yoruba **Oba** *(king) with two of his generals. They are armed with flint-locks known as "Dane" guns.*

North Africa: the long struggle

by Abdallah Laroui

Photo © Harlingue-Viollet, Paris

A spotter aircraft dropping range adjustment instructions to an artillery unit during the Rif War, Morocco.

THE nineteenth century colonialist drive in north Africa was unusual in being a sequel to earlier campaigns.

For four centuries the Moroccan Government had been resisting the Spaniards who had established themselves at Ceuta and Melilla. Moroccans were forbidden to have anything to do with the Spaniards and it was to break this blockade that Spain launched the war of 1859-1860 that was to be so disastrous for Morocco. By the end of the century, with the Bay of Rio de Oro, whose occupation was notified on 26 December 1884 to the signatories to the Act of Berlin on the division of Africa into zones of influence, Spain had three bridgeheads on the north African coast.

In 1880 and 1881, when the Madrid Conference on the granting of "protection" to individuals in Morocco met in two sessions, the *Makhzen* (the government of Morocco, and in a more general sense the country's religious and political élite) made a last attempt to get its independence and sovereignty over a clearly defined territory accepted at the international level. Despite British support, the attempt failed in face of a self-seeking alliance of France, Spain and Italy.

Immediately after the conference, France, which for a time had thought that all was lost in Morocco, raised the problem of the Tuat oases. There was much talk in Paris at that time about the plan for a trans-Saharan railway line that would open up central Africa to French trade. But the plan ran up against a serious obstacle. The oases of the central Sahara were politically dependent on Morocco. France tried to win over the Sultan but, buttressed by British support, he rejected the French demands while at the same time strengthening his administrative and political presence at Tuat.

In the east of the Maghreb, the Tunisians had for centuries been fighting the Italians, just as the Moroccans had been fighting the Spanish. A unified Italy had designs on the Regency of Tunis, where it sent immigrants, invested capital and propagated its culture. But the real danger threatening Tunisia came from the French who had already been established in Algeria for over half a century.

Following the setbacks he had suffered in Algeria, the Sultan in Constantinople had decided to bring Tripolitania and Cyrenaica back under his direct administration and to regain his political influence in Tunisia. There was considerable pro-Ottoman feeling among the élite in the Regency, but the Bey, who saw in the Sultan's moves a threat to his prerogatives, turned to Italy and France for support. This more or less deliberate line of conduct proved fatal to him. When the French Government took advantage of a favourable political conjuncture to attack the country, the Bey found himself isolated both at home and abroad and with no option but to sign a treaty, on 12 May 1881, placing himself under a French protectorate.

However, the inhabitants of the Sahel and of the religious capital of Kairouan at once revolted, hoping for a rapid Ottoman intervention. A second French expedition was then raised which was to meet strong resistance in the mountainous areas of the north-west, the centre and the south. Sfax and Gabes were bombarded by naval units, Kairouan withstood a long siege during the autumn of 1881, and the southern territories, near Tripolitania, for long remained an insecure zone.

Italy maintained her claims on the country, but the Tunisians obviously could not play that card. However, they remained faithful to Islamic sovereignty and this was to be one of the foundations of early Tunisian nationalism.

Up until the general agreement of April 1904 between France and Britain, the European powers with an interest in the Maghreb contented themselves with keeping their claims alive, occasionally grabbing bits of territory as security. At the end of the reign of Hassan I, the war of 1893 enabled Spain to consolidate her gains of 1860 in the neighbourhood of Melilla.

Seven years later, at the end of the regency of the vizier Ba Ahmad, France judged that the time was ripe finally to settle the Tuat problem to her advantage. On the pretext of scientific exploration, a strong expedition gradually approached the coveted oases and, in December 1899, appeared before In Salah and demanded immediate surrender. The local chief, appointed by the Sultan of Morocco, backed by the soldiers of the *Makhzen* and assisted by the sherifs of In Salah, put up a fierce resistance. After a series of bloody battles, such as that of In Ghar, on 27 December 1899, where, given the disparity between the two sides the outcome was never in doubt, the whole oasis region was con- ▶

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▶quered, the final battle taking place at Talmin in March 1901.

Alerted by the young Sultan Abd al-Aziz, Britain and Germany advised him to accept the *fait accompli;* this he did, signing under duress the draft treaty of 20 April 1902. In return for this major concession, he tried to have the line of demarcation in the south and east between Morocco and the French possessions clearly defined; but his efforts were unsuccessful since the French preferred a certain imprecision which offered her the prospect of further conquests.

The loss of Tuat was one of the main reasons for the break-up of the Sultan's authority which continued to crumble until 1911. The *Makhzen* knew that France planned to encircle Morocco in order to isolate and subjugate it. It also knew that Britain no longer opposed the French designs and that it could no longer count on Germany for anything but diplomatic help; Germany did indeed uphold Moroccan independence until November 1911, when it signed an agreement with France giving the latter a free hand in Morocco in exchange for compensations in equatorial Africa.

Having always refused to define the frontier with Morocco beyond the Figuig oasis, France pursued a policy of nibbling away slowly at Moroccan territory. Working their way up the valley of the Sawra, French forces gradually occupied the territory between Wadi Gir and Wadi Zusfana on the pretext of ending lawlessness and insecurity and allowing frontier trade to expand. The French Government also proposed that the *Makhzen* should share with it customs receipts, and this was agreed in March 1910.

Further south France had imposed her protectorate on the Emirs of the Trarza and the Brakna. Then, in 1905, Xavier Coppolani introduced the policy of "peaceful penetration", which took the form of making direct contact with the ethnic and brotherhood chiefs with a view to winning them over to French influence. He found himself up against a worthy opponent in Shaykh Ma'al-Aynayn who, for more than thirty years, had been the Sultan's unofficial representative. The Sultan, Mulay Abd al-Aziz, was informed and sent his uncle Mulay Idris who galvanized the resistance forces. Meanwhile, Coppolani's camp at Tidjikdja was attacked in April 1905 and the apostle of peaceful penetration was killed.

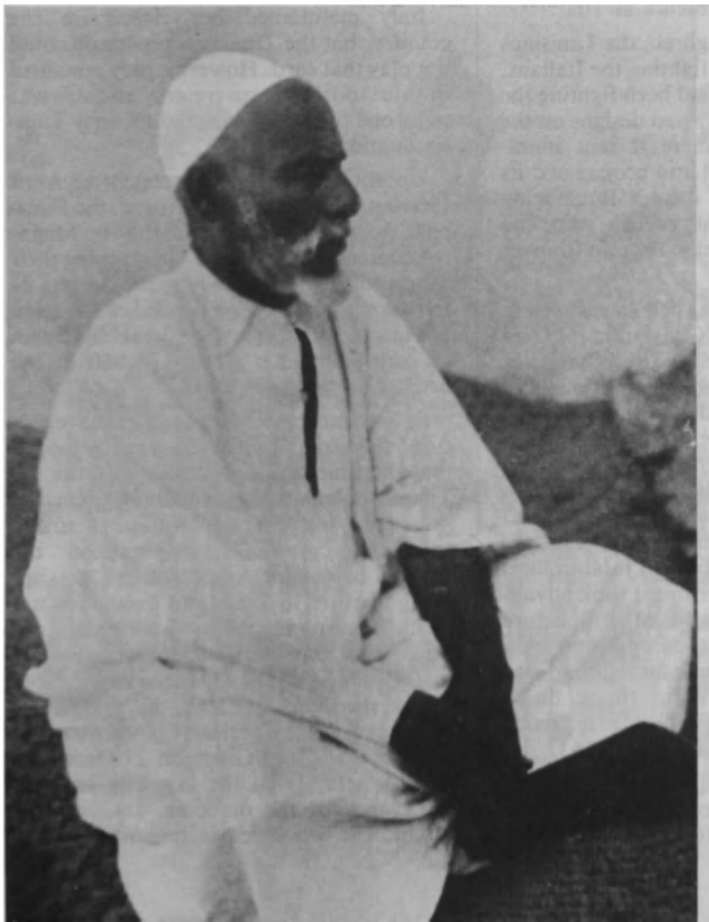
Taking advantage of the internal crisis racking Morocco, France demanded the recall of Mulay Idris, which it obtained in January 1907. Nevertheless, resistance continued. A strong expedition led by Colonel Gouraud moved northwards. It suffered a severe reverse at Al-Muynam on 16 June 1908, but succeeded in entering Atar on 9 January of the following year. Shaikh Ma'al Aynayn withdrew with his followers into the Sakiyat al-Hamra, from where his forces continued to harass the French and the Spanish until 1933.

During the same period Spain was advancing in the wake of the French. When France occupied Shinkit, the Spanish struck out from their settlement on the Bay of Rio de Oro; in 1906, they organized a Saharan intervention force which penetrated thirty kilometres inland. In the north, the Spanish waited until the French entered Wadjda, in 1907, before mounting a 45,000-strong expedition which, in September 1909, set out to conquer the Rif. In response, galvanized by Shaykh Ameriyan's call for a holy war, the Moroccan people mounted a fierce resistance which was to last until 1926.

■ **Abdallah Laroui**

The Italian Occupation of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania

The Italian colonial drive was directed against the Ottoman-controlled regions of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania. On 28 September 1911, Italy presented an ultimatum to Constantinople complaining of Ottoman negligence, and in October landed armies at Tripoli, Benghazi, Homs and Tobruk. The Turks were soon obliged to withdraw from the country, but the Italians were unable to subdue the local population, organized under the banner of Ahmad al-Sharif (below right), the spiritual leader of the Islamic fraternity known as the Sanusiyyah. In 1913, the Italians launched an attack on Ahmad al-Sharif's forces south of Derna, but, on 16 May, they suffered a stunning defeat at the battle of Yawm al-Djuma. Sanusiyyah resistance to the Italians continued for two decades, notably under the leadership of Umar al-Mukhtar (below left). Despite such drastic Italian measures as the mass imprisonment of the population in concentration camps, this resistance was only finally broken with the capture and execution of Umar al-Mukhtar in 1931.



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West Africa
The fight for survival

by M'Baye Gueye and Albert Adu Boahen

THE period from 1880 to 1900 was the high-water mark of European conquest and occupation of west Africa. There were French campaigns in the western Sudan, Ivory Coast and Dahomey between 1880 and 1898, and British campaigns in Asante, the Delta region and in northern Nigeria between 1895 and 1903.

During this period, practically all Africans had the same objective, that of defending their sovereignty and traditional way of life, but the strategies and methods they adopted varied. Three options were open to the Africans, confrontation, alliance or acquiescence and submission. The strategy of confrontation involved open warfare, sieges, guerilla tactics, scorched-earth policies, as well as diplomacy.

From 1880, the French adopted a policy of extending their control over the whole region from the Senegal to the Niger and then Chad and linking these areas with their posts on the Guinea coast in Ivory Coast and Dahomey.

In their occupation of west Africa, the French resorted almost exclusively to the method of military conquest, rather than the conclusion of treaties as the British did. In terms of African reaction, all the options open to them, namely submission, alliance and confrontation, were resorted to. However, far more of the rulers opted for the strategy of militant confrontation than for submission and alliance, and opposition here was far more protracted than anywhere else in west Africa for two main reasons. The first was that as already indicated, the French themselves used the military option almost exclusively and this evoked a militant reaction. The second reason was that the people were far more Islamized than those of other areas of west Africa and, as one scholar, M. Crowder has pointed out, since "for Muslim societies of west Africa the imposition of white rule meant submission to the infidel which was intolerable for any good Muslim", they tended to resist the Europeans with added fervour and a tenacity often lacking among non-Muslims.

These general observations are well illustrated in the history and person of Samori Touré, the valorous leader of the Mandingo Empire.

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ALBERT ADU BOAHEN *(for biographical details see page 15).*

[*One of the great resistance heroes of the colonial era, Samori Touré was born in about 1830, near Sarranko in present-day Guinea. A Dyoula and a Muslim, he succeeded in gaining the support of the Mandingo people and patiently began constructing an empire which, at its height in the early 1880s, stretched from the Upper Volta region in the west to the Fouta Djallon in the east.*]

Samori Touré chose the strategy of confrontation and not of alliance though he used the weapons of both diplomacy and warfare but with the emphasis on the latter. By 1881, Samori had already converted "the southern part of the Sudanese savannah all along the great west African forest" between the northern parts of modern Sierra Leone to the Sassandra River in the Ivory Coast, into a single empire under his unquestioned authority.

Unlike the Tukulor Empire, the Mandingo Empire was still on the "up-swing" by 1882 when the first encounter between Samori and the French occurred. The conquest of the area had also enabled Samori to build a powerful army relatively well-equipped with European arms. This army was divided into two wings, the infantry wing (the *Sofa*) which by 1887 numbered between 30,000 and 35,000 men and the cavalry wing numbering not more than 3,000 by 1887.

The infantry was divided into permanent units of 10 to 20 men known as the *sé* (feet) or *kulu* (heaps) commanded by a *kuntigi* ▶

Samori Touré at the time of his capture by Captain Gouraud (seen right) at Guelemou on 29 September 1898. *(See also colour page 19).*

Photo © Harlingue-Viollet, Paris

▶(chief), and ten *se* formed a *bolo* (arm) under the command of a *bolokuntigi*. The cavalry was divided into bands of 50 called *sèrè*. The *bolo* formed the main striking force while the *sèrè* rode alongside each *bolo*. Since these units were permanent, its members developed feelings of friendship first among themselves and of loyalty first to their local leader and then to Samori. Thus, the army soon assumed "a quasi-national character because it achieved a very remarkable homogeneity".

What was unique about Samori's army was the standard of its weapons and training. Unlike most of the armies of west Africa, not only was this army virtually professional, but it was armed by Samori himself. Up to 1876, he armed them with old guns which the local blacksmiths could repair themselves. But from 1876 onwards, he also began to order more modern European weapons mainly from Sierra Leone and carefully studied them to find those that were most suitable for his area. Thus from 1885, he replaced the Chassepot rifles whose big cartridges soon rotted in the humidity of the area with the more suitable Gras rifles with lighter cartridges and Kropatscheks which were Gras repeater rifles.

He continued to rely on these two till the 1880s since he was able to train a group of blacksmiths who could effectively copy those rifles. From 1888, he also added to his stock some of the new quick-firing rifles and by 1893 he had about 6,000 of them which he used till his defeat. However, he never acquired any artillery which was a great handicap in his campaigns against the French.

Samori was virtually at the height of his power when he first came into contact with the French in 1882. In February of that year, he was called upon by Lieutenant Alakamessa who notified him of the order from the Upper Senegal-Niger high command to withdraw from Kenyeran, an important market-centre which controlled Samori's route to the Mandingo areas.

As might have been expected, Samori refused. This led to a surprise attack on his army by the French commander Borgnis-Desbordes who was forced to beat a hasty retreat. Samori's brother, Kémé-Brema, attacked the French at Wenyako near Bamako in April. Though he won the battle on 2 April, he was defeated on 12 April by a much smaller French army. Samori thereupon tried to avoid conflict with the French and directed his action towards Kenedugu.

In 1885, when Combes occupied Bure, the gold of which was important to the economy of his empire, Samori realized how great was the threat that hung over his State. He resolved to expel the French from the area by force. Three armies, his own and those of Kémé and Masara-Mamadi, were charged with this operation. By a vast pincer movement, Bure was easily recaptured and the French were forced to decamp for fear of being encircled.

Samori thereupon decided to cultivate his relations with the British in Sierra Leone. After having occupied Falaba in 1884, he dispatched emissaries to Freetown, to propose to the governor that he place his entire country under the protection of the British Government. The offer was a mere manoeuvre on the part of Samori, whose intention was in no way to relinquish his sovereignty but to make the French respect it by allying himself with a powerful government.

When that move failed, Samori turned to the French and signed a treaty with them on 28 March 1886. He agreed to withdraw his troops to the right bank of the Niger, but maintained his rights over Bure and the Mandingo of Kangaba. In another treaty with the French on 25 March 1887 which amended that of the previous year, Samori ceded the left bank of the river to the French and even agreed to place his country under French protection.

Samori had perhaps signed the other document in the hope that the French would help him against Tieba, the Faama of Sikasso whom he attacked in April 1887 with a 12,000 strong army, while the French had signed it because they needed to prevent any alliance between Samori and the Soninké leader Mamadou Lamine whom they were then fighting. When he saw that instead of behaving as allies and assisting him, the French were rather encouraging dissidence and rebellion in the areas recently subdued and were attempting to prevent him from obtaining supplies of weapons from Sierra Leone, he raised the siege of Sikasso in August 1888 and prepared to take up arms against the invader.

He reorganized the army, concluded a treaty with the British in Sierra Leone in May 1890 which enabled him to buy modern weapons for the next three years in increasing quantities, and trained his troops in the European manner. Platoons and companies were activated. He adopted defence as his military tactic. Of course, there could be no question of using the *tatas* (earth-walled settlements) for shelter, as there was no chance that they could hold out against artillery. His strategy consisted of endowing his troops with great mobility, so that they could surprise the enemy, inflict heavy losses upon him, and disappear.

In March 1890, Archinard captured Segou and in his attempt to defeat Samori before ceding the Upper Senegal-Niger command to Humbert, attacked him in March 1891. Archinard thought that

Photo © Longman, London

Resistance in the Niger Delta

In the Niger Delta, as in many other areas of Nigeria, the British had by 1884 signed treaties of protection with most of the Delta chiefs. While some chiefs allowed missionaries to operate in their States others did not, but all of them insisted on their sovereign right to regulate trade and to levy duties on British traders. This the new British consuls such as Hewett and Johnson would not tolerate. Jaja of Opobo (left), one of the wealthiest and most powerful of the Delta chiefs, insisted on payment of duties by British traders and ordered a complete stoppage of trade on the river until one British firm agreed to pay duties. The consul, Johnson, ordered him to stop levying duties, but instead of complying Jaja despatched a mission to the Colonial Office to protest against the order. In 1887, when Jaja still refused to comply in spite of Johnson's threats to bombard his town, Johnson enticed him aboard a ship under a promise of safe conduct, but then arrested him and sent him to Accra where he was tried and deported to the West Indies. Stunned by this treatment the other chiefs surrendered and accepted governing councils imposed on them by Johnson.

Samori's empire would collapse at the first onslaught. Though that attack resulted in the capturing of Kankan on 7 April and the burning of Bisandougou, its effect was quite the opposite since it not only provided Samori with a salutary warning but it enabled him also to continue the attacks on the French at Kankan and to defeat them at the battle of Dabadugu on 3 September 1891.

The major confrontation between the French and Samori, however, took place in 1892. Bent on defeating Samori, Humbert launched an attack on the central part of the Empire in January 1892 with 1,300 carefully picked riflemen and 3,000 porters. Samori took personal command of his carefully chosen army of 2,500 men to meet Humbert. Though these men, "fighting like demons, clung fiercely to every defensive point on the way", to quote historian Yves Person's words, they were defeated and Humbert succeeded in capturing Bisandougou, Sanankoro and Kerwane. Humbert himself admitted, however, that the results were meagre in comparison to the heavy losses that he had sustained. Furthermore, Samori had ordered the civil population to withdraw at the approach of the French troops.

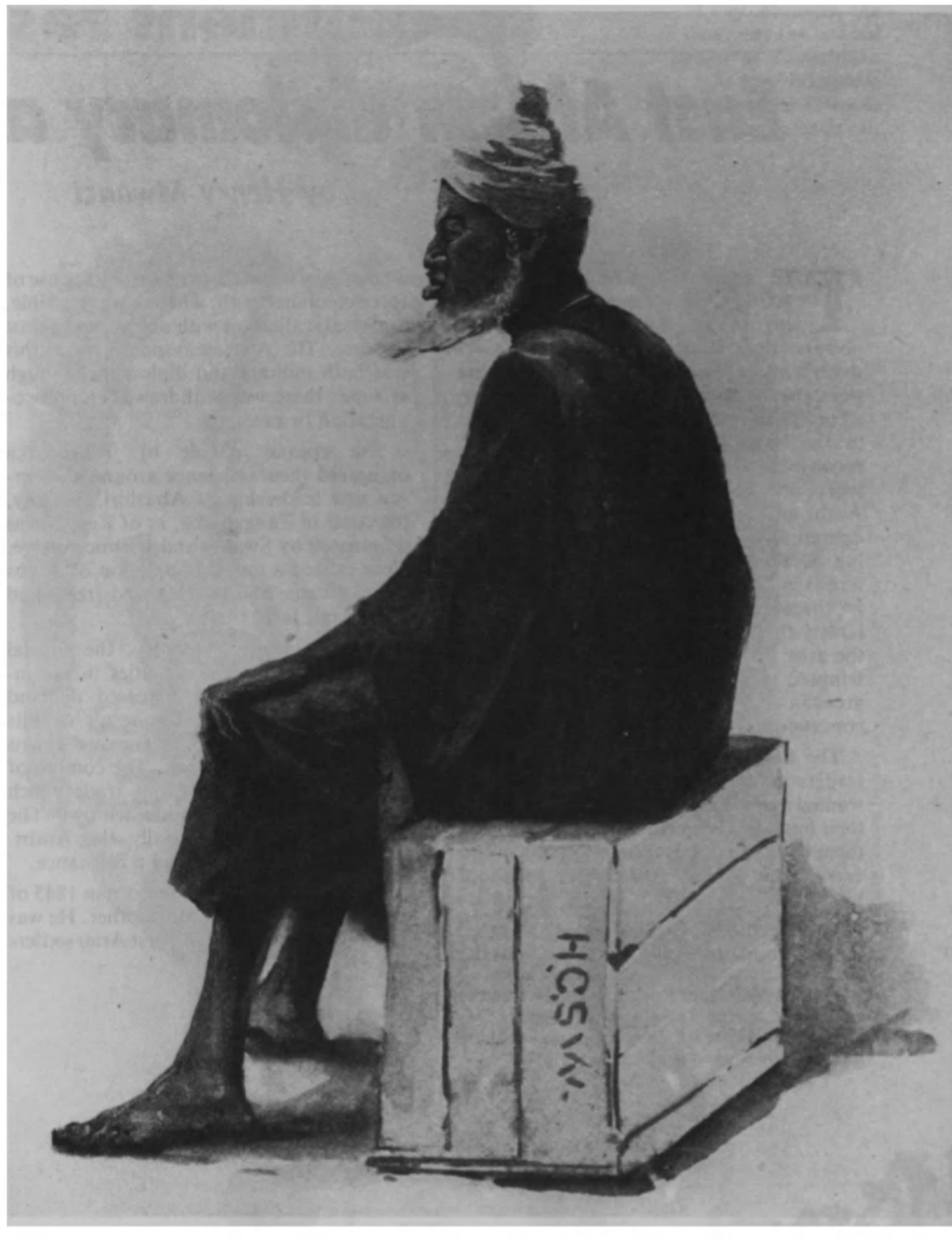
However, Samori had no illusions. After the violent encounters with the Humbert column in which he lost over a thousand men of his élite units as compared with only about a hundred lost by the French, he became convinced of the futility of confronting the French. There were then two options open to him: either to surrender or to withdraw. He ruled out the former and decided to abandon his homeland and move to the east to create a new empire out of the reach of the Europeans.

Still continuing his scorched earth policy, he began his move eastwards towards the Bandama and the Comoe rivers. Though in 1894 he lost the last route supplying him with modern weapons, which was the one to Monrovia, he nevertheless fought on. At the beginning of 1895, he encountered and beat back a French column coming from the Baule country under the command of Monteil, and between July 1895 and January 1896 went on to conquer the Abron (Gyaman) kingdom and the western part of Gonja. By that time, he had succeeded in creating a new empire in the hinterland of the Ivory Coast and Asante.

In March 1897, his son Sarankenyi-Mori met and defeated a British column under the command of Henderson near Wa while Samori himself attacked and destroyed Kong in May 1897 and pushed on to Bobo where he encountered a French column under the command of Caudrelier.

Caught between the French and the British and having vainly attempted to sow discord between them by returning to the latter the territory of Bouna coveted by the former, Samori decided to return to his Toma allies in Liberia. On the way, he was captured in a surprise attack at Guelemou by Gouraud on 29 September 1898 and deported to Gabon where he died in 1900. His capture brought to an end what a recent scholar has described as "the longest series of campaigns against a single enemy in the history of French Sudanese conquest".

■ **M'Baye Gueye and Albert Adu Boahen**



The Hut Tax Rebellion

The Hut Tax Rebellion of 1898 was the response of the Temne and Mende peoples of Sierra Leone to the consolidation of British rule by the appointment of District Commissioners, the expansion of the Frontier Police, the abolition of the slave trade and slavery, the Protectorate Ordinance of 1896 and finally, the imposition of a tax of five shillings a year on all two-roomed houses and ten shillings on all larger houses in the Protectorate. All the Temne chiefs refused to pay the tax and rose up in rebellion under one of their number, chief Bai Bureh. They were joined by almost three-quarters of the Protectorate. The rebel forces attacked and looted trading stations and killed British officials and troops and all those suspected of assisting the colonial government. By May 1898, the rebel armies were within about 25 miles of Freetown and two companies of troops had to be hastily brought in from Lagos to defend the town. What was the true nature of this revolt? The British Governor of Sierra Leone attributed not only this rebellion but the general resistance to colonial rule that was raging at the time to "the growing political consciousness of the African and his increasing sense of his worth and autonomy". As he put it, "the native is beginning to feel his strength from the value that is set on him for products of his country and his labour by the white man and in future the latter will not be able to trade so much on his simplicity and ignorance of the world as in the past". Above, a sketch by a British army officer of the rebel leader, Bai Bureh, after his capture.

Photo © BBC, Hulton Picture Library, London

East Africa: diplomacy and defiance

by Henry Mwanzi

THE colonialist scramble for east Africa was three-pronged, involving, as it did, three competing powers: the Sultanate of Zanzibar, Germany and Britain. The first on the scene were the Arabs who operated from Zanzibar. Their interests both on the coast and in the interior were largely commercial, revolving around the trade in slaves and ivory. Before the 1880s and 1890s, these Arabs and Swahili traders were content to operate from the coast. But during the closing decades of the last century, Arab interests in the interior of east Africa began to be threatened by German and British interests that had been steadily penetrating the area. In the face of this, the Arabs attempted to take political control of some areas in order to protect their commercial concessions.

The Europeans in the interior included traders and missionaries, all of whom wanted the occupation of east Africa by their home governments in order to provide them with security as well as a free hand to carry out their enterprises without hindrance.

The methods of European advance varied from place to place. But, on the whole, they were characterized by the use of force combined with, where it was possible, diplomatic alliances with one group against another. The African response to all this was both military and diplomatic; though at times there was withdrawal or non-co-operation or passivity.

The coastal people of Tanganyika organized their resistance around the person and leadership of Abushiri. Socially, the coast of Tanganyika, as of Kenya, was dominated by Swahili and Islamic culture. Here existed a mixed population of Arabs and Africans who intermarried freely and carried out local trade.

In the nineteenth century, the coastal Arabs increased their activities in the interior in response to increased demand for ivory and slaves. The result of this flourishing trade was that many towns sprang up along the coast. The coming of the Germans threatened this trade which they sought to supplant with their own. The local populations, especially the Arabs, resented this and organized a resistance.

Abushiri, the leader, was born in 1845 of an Arab father and a Galla mother. He was a descendant of one of the first Arab settlers on the coast who came to regard themselves as local people. Like many others, he opposed the influence of the Sultanate of Zanzibar on the coast and even advocated independence. As a young man, he had organized expeditions into the interior to trade in ivory. From the profits made, he bought himself a farm and planted sugar cane.

Under his leadership, the coastal people fired on a German warship at Tanga in September 1888 and then gave the Germans two days to leave the coast. They later attacked Kilwa and killed the two Germans there and then attacked Bagamoyo with 8,000 men on 22 September. But the Germans who termed this "the Arab revolt" sent out Hermann von Wissmann. He reached Zanzibar in April 1889, attacked Abushiri in his fortress near Bagamoyo and drove him out. Abushiri escaped northwards to Uzigua where he was betrayed and handed over to the Germans who hanged him at Pangani on 15 December 1889. The coastal resistance finally collapsed

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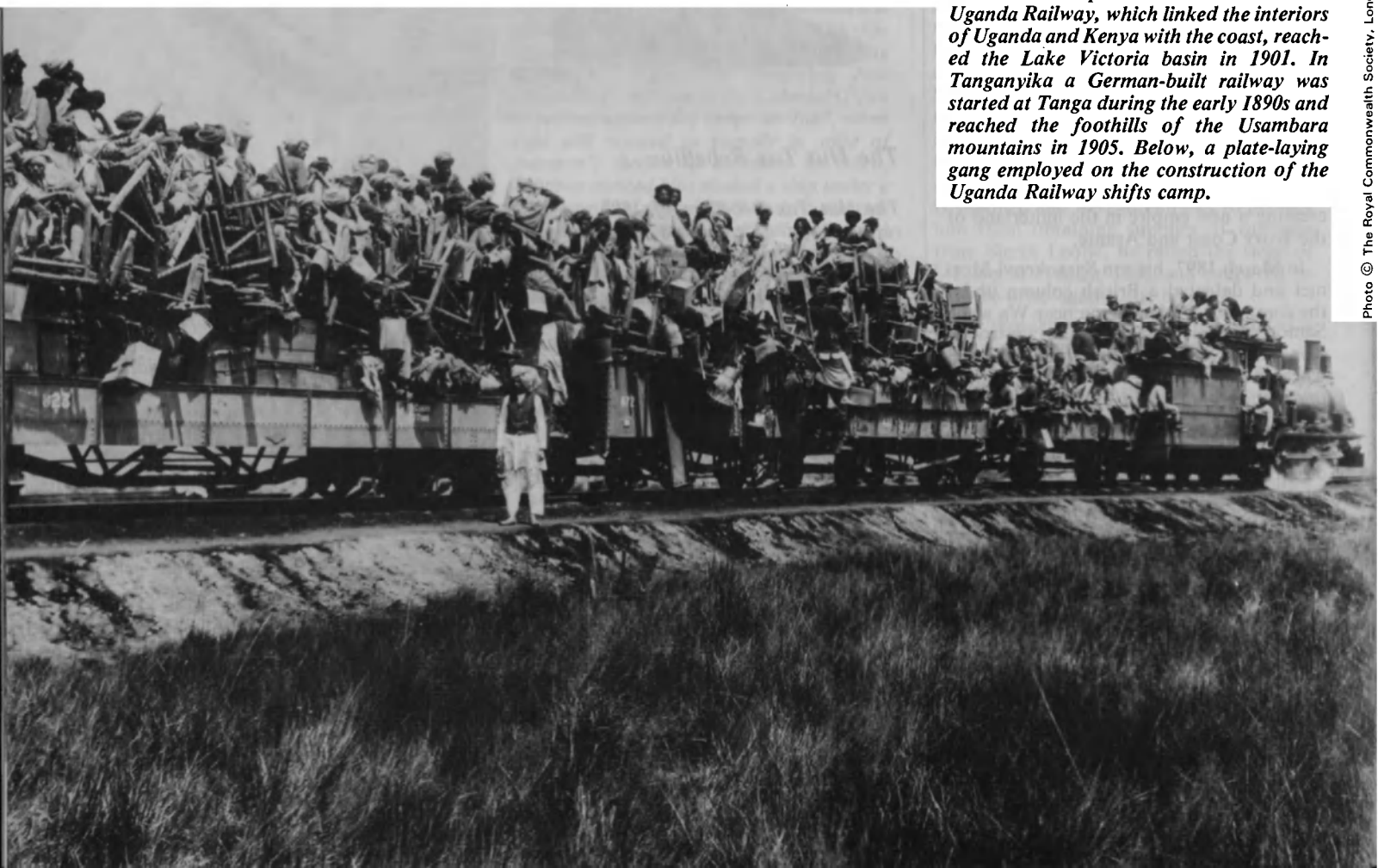


Railways were an important instrument of the colonizing process; they facilitated military conquest, helped establish political control and enabled the colonies to be developed as sources of raw materials for export to Europe rather than as areas of industrial development. The British-built Uganda Railway, which linked the interiors of Uganda and Kenya with the coast, reached the Lake Victoria basin in 1901. In Tanganyika a German-built railway was started at Tanga during the early 1890s and reached the foothills of the Usambara mountains in 1905. Below, a plate-laying gang employed on the construction of the Uganda Railway shifts camp.

Photo © The Royal Commonwealth Society, London

Chief Abushiri, the leader of the coastal people of Tanganyika in their resistance against the German colonial occupation.

Photo © East African Publishing House Ltd.

when Kilwa was bombarded and taken by the Germans in May 1890.

The Germans, like the British in Kenya, were practiced in the art of divide and rule by allying with one group against another. There were many such allies. The Marealle and the Kibanga near the Tanganyikan mountains of Kilimanjaro and Usambara were, to name but two examples, among those who saw in the Germans an opportunity to make friends in order to defeat their enemies. These people, like others such as the Wanga in Kenya, believed that they were using the Germans even though in the process they were made use of much more by the Germans than perhaps they realized. The Arabs on the coast, however, were firmly in the employ of the Germans as they were in that of the British in Kenya and they provided the first local personnel in the service of imperialism.

A similar pattern of response to British colonialism took place in Uganda. The period between 1891 and 1899 saw a clash between the forces of Kabarega, the King of Bunyoro and those of Lugard and other British agents. After some clashes in which his forces were defeated, Kabarega turned to diplomacy. Twice he attempted to come to terms with Lugard, but the latter would not countenance these gestures. Mwanga, the Kabaka of Buganda, at times tried to intercede on behalf of the Bunyoro King but to no avail. Eventually, Kabarega resorted to guerilla warfare, probably the first of its kind in East Africa. He withdrew from Bunyoro to the Lango country in the north from where he harassed British forces time and again.

One of the British officials occupying Bunyoro at the time, Thurston, commented: "Kabarega was at his old tricks—giving every possible trouble but never standing up for a fair fight, preferring to pursue his favourite methods of assassination. Kabarega caused poison to be given to a friendly chief and he died, but I have had the poisoner killed".

What Thurston says here is a perfect example of guerilla tactics, of withdrawing to a neighbouring country in order to harass occupying forces in one's own country. Kabarega was later joined in Lango by Mwanga, but their hide-out was stormed in 1899 and both kings were captured and taken to Kisimayu where Mwanga died in 1903.

■ **Henry Mwanzi**

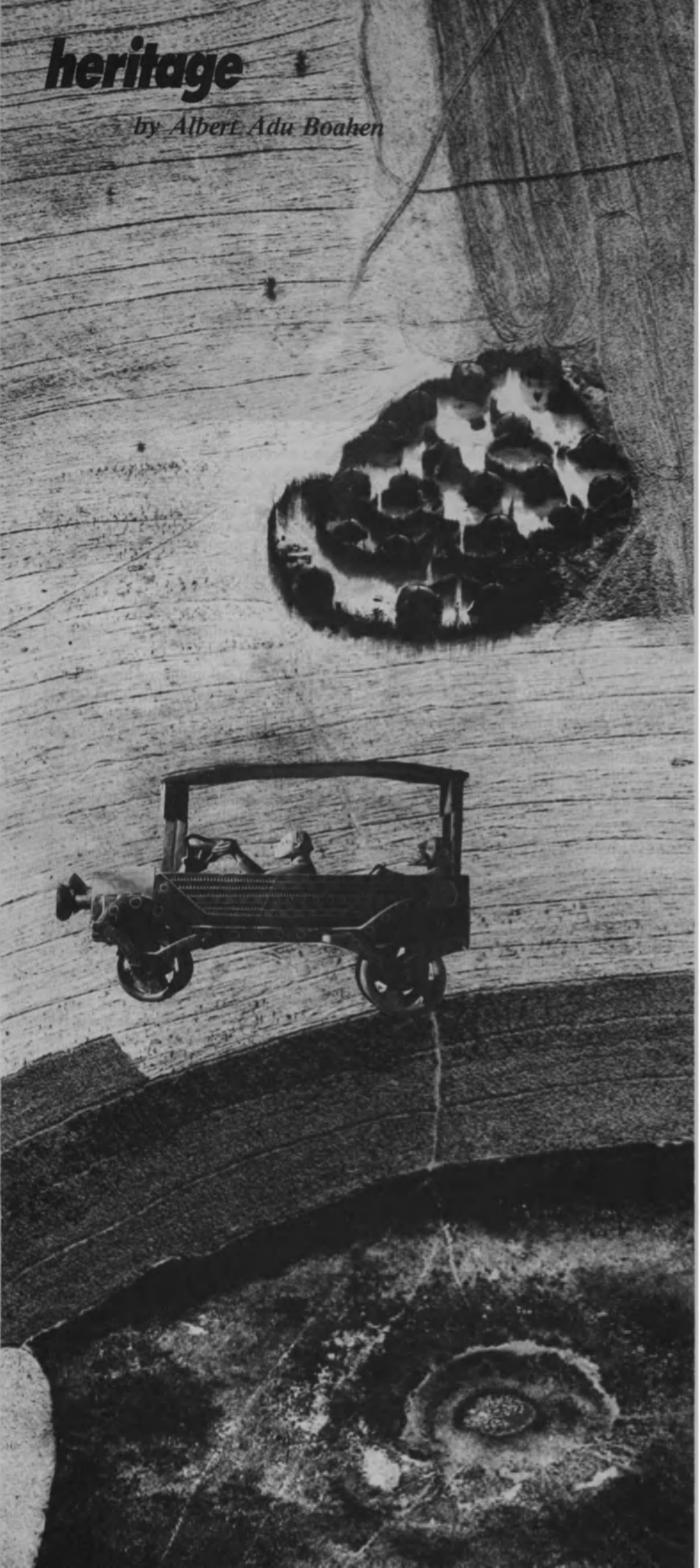
Photo © The Royal Commonwealth Society, London

King Mwanga of Buganda (left) and King Kabarega of Bunyoro on their way under escort to the coast after their capture by British forces in 1899. Kabarega was exiled to the Seychelles and Mwanga to Kisimayu, where he died in 1903. Both rulers resisted British colonialism with a mixture of diplomacy, direct confrontation and guerilla warfare.

The colonial

heritage

by Albert Adu Boahen



BY 1935, colonialism had been fastened on Africa like a steel grid, and it looked as if it was going to remain there for ever. However, colonialism proved just as ephemeral as any other institution created and maintained by force. Within a matter of only some forty-five years from 1935, the colonial system had been uprooted from over ninety per cent of Africa and confined to that part of the continent south of the Limpopo River.

What legacy did colonialism bequeath to Africa? Did it constitute an important revolutionary episode in the history of the continent? Was it a major break with the past, or was it, after all, merely a passing event?

To some historians its impact was on balance either a blessing in disguise or, at worst, not harmful for Africa:

"It is easy to cavil today" wrote P.C. Lloyd, "at the slow rate of economic development during the half-century of colonial rule... Nevertheless, the difference between the condition of African society at the end of the nineteenth century and at the end of the Second World War is staggering. The colonial powers provided the infrastructure on which progress in the 'independence' period has depended: a fairly efficient administrative machine, reaching down to villages in the most remote areas, a network of roads and railways, and basic services in health and education."

Others have contended that the beneficial effect of colonialism in Africa was virtually nil. The Black Guyanese historian, Walter Rodney, has taken a particularly extreme position:

"The argument suggests that, on the one hand, there was exploitation and oppression, but, on the other hand, that colonial ▶

ALBERT ADU BOAHEN *(for biographical details see page 15).*

"The phenomenal growth of the population of the urban centres **[during the colonial period]** *was not the result of the natural increase of the urban population but rather of the continuous pull of young men and women to the urban centres by the need for education and employment and the push from the rural areas by famine, epidemics, poverty and taxation."*
Since independence the rapid growth of urban centres in Africa has continued. Opposite page, the modern face of Dakar, capital city of Senegal.

"A huge gap exists even today between urban and rural areas in Africa and there is no doubt that it was the colonial system that originated and widened this gap."
Left, a kraal (village) surrounded by tilled fields in Ovamboland, Namibia.
Photos Georg Gerster © Rapho, Paris

The impact of colonialism on African art was neither profound nor permanent. Even when commenting on the colonial condition, African artists drew on the continent's age-old artistic traditions, as witness this tongue-in-cheek portrayal (inset left) by a wood-carver from the Congo (Zaire) of a 1920s Belgian colonial official in his chauffeur-driven car.
Photo © Werner Forman Archive, London

"Because of the concentration on the production of cash crops during the colonial era, Africans were compelled to ignore the production of food for their own consumption. It was this neglect of food production, coupled with forced labour, which caused so much malnutrition, severe famine and so many epidemics in some parts of Africa during the early colonial days. Thus, under the colonial system, Africans were in most cases made to produce what they did not consume and to consume what they did not produce." Above, harvesting the cotton crop in the Sudan.

▶ governments did much for the benefit of Africans and that they developed Africa. It is our contention that this is completely false. Colonialism had only one hand—it was a one-armed bandit."

From the available evidence, however, it would appear that a much more balanced assessment is necessary. The impact of colonialism was positive as well as negative. However, it should be emphasized that most of the positive effects were, by and large, rather accidental by-products of activities or measures intended to promote the interests of the colonizers.

The first positive political impact was the establishment of a greater degree of continuous peace and stability in Africa than before. The nineteenth century was the century of the Mfecane and the activities of the Swahili-Arab and Nyamwezi traders such as Tipu Tip and Msiri in central and southern Africa, of the Fulani *djihads* and the rise of the Tukulor and Mandingo empires in western Sudan, and of the disintegration of the Oyo and Asante empires in west Africa; and all this caused a great deal of instability and insecurity.

The first two or three decades of the colonial era, that is from 1880 to 1910, intensified this state of instability, violence and disorder and caused wholesale and unpardonable destruction and loss of population. But after the colonial occupation and the establishment of various administrative machineries, most parts of Africa, especially from the end of the First World War onwards, enjoyed a great degree of continuous peace and security.

The second positive impact is reflected in the very geo-political appearance of the modern independent States of Africa. In place of the hundreds of independent clan and lineage groups, city-States, kingdoms and empires, without any clearly defined boundaries, were now established fifty new States with, in most cases, fixed boundaries; and it is rather significant that the boundaries of the States as laid down during the colonial era have not undergone any changes since independence.

Thirdly, the colonial system also introduced into most parts of Africa two new institutions which have been maintained since independence, namely a new judicial system and a new bureaucracy or civil service.

The final positive impact of colonialism was not only the birth of a new type of African nationalism, but also of pan-Africanism. Important as this legacy was, however, it is a typical example of the accidental by-products rather than the deliberate creations of the colonial presence. No colonial ruler ever set out to create and nurture African nationalism.

But if there were positive effects, the negative effects were even greater. In the first place, important as the development of nationalism was, it was generated by a sense of anger, frustration and humiliation caused by some of the oppressive, discriminatory and exploitative measures introduced by the colonial rulers. With the overthrow of colonialism that feeling was bound to lose some of its momentum and the problem that has faced the rulers of independent African States has been how to replace it with a positive and enduring feeling of nationalism.

Secondly, while admitting that the geo-political set-up that emerged was an asset, even though an accidental one, it nevertheless created far more problems than it solved. Though the boundaries of the States that emerged were not as arbitrary as is generally believed, there is no doubt that many of the States that emerged were artificial creations made up of a medley of peoples with different cultures, traditions, origins and languages. The problems of nation-building posed by such a medley of peoples have not proved to be easily soluble.

Another outcome was that the States that emerged were of widely differing sizes with unequal natural resources and economic potentialities.

Another important but negative political impact of colonialism was the weakening of the indigenous systems of government. The colonial officials on the spot became, in effect, dictators instead of advisers to the traditional rulers whom they used to enforce some of the measures deemed obnoxious by their subjects, such as forced labour, direct taxes and compulsory recruitment of men for the colonial armies. Moreover, the spread of the Christian religion further undermined the spiritual basis of the authority of the kings.

A product of colonialism which is often ignored by historians but which has turned out to be of crucial importance was the creation of full-time, standing armies. These armies were originally created, most of them in the 1880s and 1890s, first for the conquest and occupation of Africa, then for the maintenance of colonial control, and, finally, for the prosecution of global wars and the suppression of independence movements in Africa. After the overthrow of the colonial rulers, these armies were not disbanded but were taken over by the new independent African rulers and they have turned out to be the most problematic of the products of colonialism.

The final and probably the most important negative political impact of colonialism was the loss of African sovereignty and independence and the right to deal directly with the outside world.

This meant, above all, the loss of their right to control their own destiny, to plan their own development, manage their economy, determine their own strategies and priorities, borrow freely from the world at large the latest and most appropriate technology, and generally manage, or even mismanage, their own affairs and derive inspiration and a sense of fulfilment from their successes and lessons and experience from their failures. In short, colonialism deprived Africans of one of the most fundamental and inalienable rights of a people—the right of liberty.

Moreover, the seventy-year period of colonialism in Africa was the very period which witnessed tremendous and decisive developments and changes in both the capitalist and socialist countries. It was the period, for instance, that saw the entry of Europe into the age of the aeroplane and the motor vehicle and the nuclear age. Had Africa been in control of her own destiny, she could have benefited from or even been

"Closely associated with the spread of Christianity was that of Western education. Certainly, by the end of the colonial regime, there were relatively few areas without at least elementary schools... The curricula provided by these institutions were determined by the colonial rulers and were closely modelled on, if not carbon copies of, those of the metropolitan countries and therefore irrelevant to the needs of the continent." Right, the Church Missionary Society High School, Mengo, Uganda.

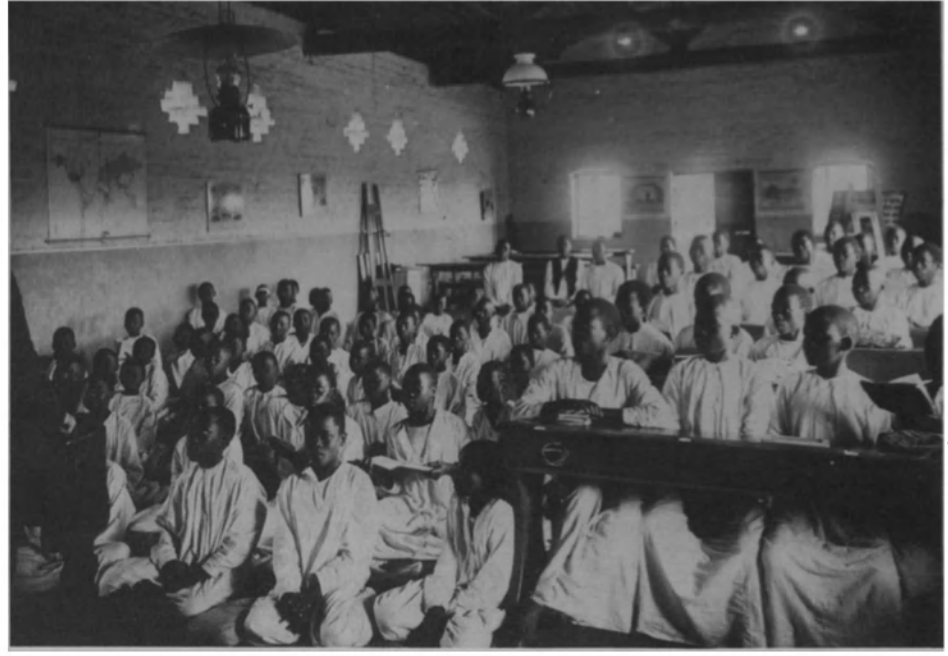


Photo © The Royal Commonwealth Society, London

part of these phenomenal changes. But colonialism completely insulated and isolated her from these changes and kept her in a position of dependency.

The impact in the economic field was equally important and equally mixed. The first and most obvious of the positive impacts was the provision of a basic infrastructure of roads, railways, telegraph, telephone and, in some cases, even airports. Completed by the 1930s, this infrastructure facilitated the movement not only of goods, the new cash crops and troops, but also of peoples, and this latter factor helped to minimize parochialism, regionalism and ethnocentricism.

Equally important and significant was the impact of colonialism on the primary sector of the economy. It was during the colonial period that the full mineral potential of Africa was realized; the mining industry boomed while the cultivation of cash crops such as cocoa, coffee, tobacco, groundnuts, sisal and rubber spread. In west Africa these cash crops were produced by the Africans themselves, clear evidence of their willingness and ability to adapt and respond to the right incentives.

This economic revolution had some far-reaching consequences. Before the colonial era huge tracts of land in many parts of Africa were not only under-populated but also under-utilized. The introduction and spread of cash crops and the mining industries put an end to all this. Secondly, the economic revolution led to an increase in the purchasing power of some Africans and with it an increase in their demand for consumer goods. Thirdly, the growing of cash crops by Africans enabled individuals of whatever social status, especially in the rural areas, to acquire wealth.

Another significant revolutionary impact was the introduction of the money economy. This led to the emergence of a new class of wage earners and salaried groups. The introduction of the money economy also led to the commencement of banking activities in Africa, which became another significant feature of the economy of independent African States.

By 1935, the economy of Africa had become inextricably tied to that of the world in general and of the capitalist economy of the colonial powers in particular. The years after 1935 merely deepened this link and not even independence has fundamentally altered this relationship.

Was the colonial impact on Africa in the economic field then a desirable one? Far from it.

In the first place, the infrastructure that was provided by colonialism was not as adequate or as useful as it could have been. Most of the roads and railways were constructed not to open up the country but merely to connect the areas having mineral deposits and the potential for the production of cash crops with the sea, and there were hardly any feeder or branch roads. Nor were they meant to facilitate inter-African travel and communication.

In the second place, such economic growth as occurred in the colonies was based on the natural resources of the area and this meant, therefore, that areas not naturally endowed were totally neglected.

Thirdly, a typical feature of the colonial economy was the total and deliberate neglect or discouragement of industrialization and the processing of locally-produced raw materials and agricultural products in most of the colonies. Simple and basic items such as matches, candles, edible oil, even lime and orange juice, all of which could easily have been produced in Africa, were imported. All African States were therefore turned into markets for the consumption of manufactured goods from the metropolitan countries and producers of raw materials for export. This total neglect of industrialization by the colonial powers should be chalked up as one of the most unpardonable indictments of colonialism.

Fourthly, not only was industrialization neglected but such industries and crafts as had existed in Africa in pre-colonial times were almost destroyed as a result of the importation into Africa of cheap, mass-produced commodities. African technological development was thereby halted and was not resumed until after independence.

Fifthly, even though agricultural crops came to constitute the main source of income for most African States, no attempts were made to diversify the agricultural economies of the colonies. On the contrary, by 1935, the production of only single or, at best, two cash crops had become the rule—cocoa in the Gold Coast, groundnuts in Senegal and Gambia, cotton in Sudan, coffee and cotton in Uganda and coffee and sisal in Tanganyika. Most African States, on the attainment of independence, found themselves saddled with monoculture economies and were therefore highly sensitive to the prevailing international trade winds. Colonialism did indeed complete the integration of African economies into the world international economic order, but in a very disadvantageous and exploitative manner.

Because of the concentration on the production of cash crops during the colonial era, Africans were compelled to ignore the production of food for their own consumption. It was this neglect of food production, coupled with forced labour, which caused so much malnutrition, severe famine and so many epidemics in some parts of Africa during the early colonial days. Thus, under the colonial system, Africans were in most cases made to produce what they did not consume and to consume what they did not produce, clear evidence of the lopsided and exploitative nature of the colonial economy.

The colonial presence also led to the appearance on the African scene of an increasing number of expatriate banking, shipping and trading firms, and from the 1910s onwards their amalgamation and consolidation into fewer and fewer oligopolies. Since it was these trading companies that controlled the export as well as the import trade and fixed the prices not only of imported commodities but also of the exports produced by Africans, the huge profits that accrued from these activities went to the companies and not to the Africans.

Colonialism also virtually put a stop to inter-African trade as the flow of trade from each colony was reoriented towards the metropolitan countries.

Finally, whatever economic growth there was during the colonial period was achieved at a phenomenal and unjustifiable cost to the African—forced labour, migrant labour, compulsory cultivation of certain crops, compulsory seizure of land, forced movements of populations with the consequent dislocation of family life, the pass system, high mortality rates in the mines and on the plantations and brutal repression of the protest and resistance movements these measures generated.

What is the record of colonialism in the social field? The first important beneficial ▶

Photo Marc and Evelyne Bernheim © Rapho Guillumette Pictures, New York

During the colonial period, "In the rural areas, and even to some extent in the urban centres, new beliefs, new gods, new utensils, new artifacts and new objects were added to the old ones. Certainly, in these areas many Christians did and still do retain their belief in their traditional gods. Indeed, in the field of religion, it was if anything the European religions that were Africanized, as is obvious from the rituals of some of the syncretic and millenarian churches, and not the other way round".
Above, Baoulé Gu mask representing the creator of the universe. The curves of the mask direct the eye to the mouth, source of the creative "breath spirit".

"Another highly regrettable social impact of colonialism was the deterioration that it caused in the status of women in Africa... There does not appear to be any doubt that women were inhibited from joining in most of the activities introduced or intensified by colonialism. The colonial world was indeed a man's world and women were not encouraged to play any meaningful role in it."
Below, Fang mask from Gabon.

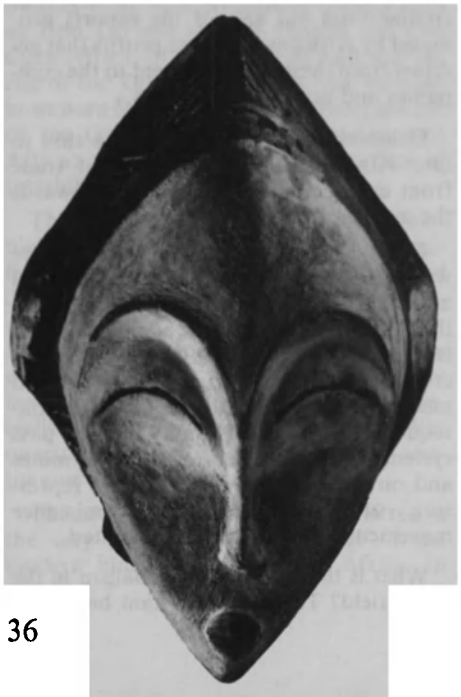


Photo ©Claude Sauvageot, Musée de l'Homme, Paris

▶ social effect was the overall increase of the population of Africa during the colonial period of nearly forty per cent after an initial decline during the first two or three decades. This increase was due to the establishment of an economic base, the spread of roads and railways which ensured that food could be rushed to famine areas, and the campaigns launched against epidemic diseases such as sleeping sickness, bubonic plague and yellow fever.

Closely connected with this was the second social impact of colonialism—urbanization. The kingdoms and empires of Africa had such capitals or political centres as Kumbi Saleh, Benin, Ile-Ife, Kumasi, Gao and Zimbabwe, commercial centres such as Kano, Jenné, Sofala and Malindi, and such educational centres as Timbuktu, Cairo and Fez. But there is no doubt that, as a result of colonialism, the pace of urbanization was greatly accelerated and completely new towns came into existence.

Moreover, the population of both the already existing towns and the new towns grew by leaps and bounds during the colonial era. The population of Nairobi, founded in 1896 as a transit depot for the construction of the Uganda railway, increased from a mere handful to 13,145 in 1927 and to over 25,000 in 1940, and that of Lagos from 74,000 in 1914 to 230,000 in 1950, that of Dakar from 19,800 in 1916 to 92,000 in 1936 and to 132,000 in 1945.

There was also undoubtedly an improvement in the quality of life, particularly for those living in the urban centres. This was the result of the provision of hospitals, dispensaries, pipe-borne water, sanitary facilities, better housing and the abolition of such practices as domestic slavery by the colonial rulers as well as the increase in employment opportunities.

The spread of Christianity, Islam and Western education was another important impact of colonialism. It was during the colonial period that Christianity gained a firm foothold in eastern and central Africa, at times following and at times being followed by the flag and trade. Islam also spread rapidly in western and eastern Africa as a result of the general improvement in communications during the colonial period and the patronage of both the French and the British rulers. It should be emphasized that these gains were not made at the expense of traditional religion. What colonialism did, then, was to strengthen and perpetuate religious pluralism in Africa, thereby enriching its religious life.

Closely associated with the spread of Christianity was that of Western education. Certainly, by the end of the colonial regime, there were relatively few areas without at least elementary schools. The spread of Western education had far-reaching social effects, among which was an increase in the number of the westernized educated African élite, an élite which now constitutes the ruling oligarchy and the backbone of the civil service of African States.

Another important colonial impact, a mixed blessing as we shall see, was the provision of a *lingua franca* for each colony or set of colonies. In all the colonies, the mother tongue of the colonial power, either in its pure or pidgin form, became the official and business language and, in many cases, the main means of communication between the numerous linguistic groups that constituted the population of each colony. It is significant that, except in north Africa, The United Republic of Tanzania, Kenya and Madagascar, these languages have remained the official languages to this very day.

The final beneficial social impact was the new social structure that colonialism introduced into some parts of Africa or whose development it accelerated in others. Although the traditional social structure allowed for social mobility, its class structure appeared to give undue weight to birth. The new colonial order, on the other hand, emphasized individual merit and achievement. All these changes radically altered the traditional social structure.

Thus, by the 1930s, in place of the pre-colonial social classes of the traditional ruling aristocracy, the ordinary people, domestic slaves and a relatively small educated élite, a new society emerged that had become more sharply divided than before into urban and rural dwellers, each of which was differently stratified. Mobility within this new structure was based more on individual effort and attainment than on ascription.

On the negative side, however, the phenomenal growth of the population of the urban centres was not the result of the natural increase of the urban population but rather of the continuous pull of young men and women to the urban centres by the need for education and employment and the push from the rural areas by famine, epidemics, poverty and taxation. Moreover, since the Europeans tended to live in the urban centres, all those facilities that improved the quality of life were established only in those areas. The rural areas were therefore virtually neglected and this in turn accentuated the drift from one to the other. A huge gap exists even today between urban and rural areas in Africa and there is no doubt that it was the colonial system that originated and widened this gap.

Nor did the migrants find the urban centres the safe and rich haven they had expected. In no town were the Africans accepted as equals and fully integrated. Moreover, nowhere did a majority of them find jobs or decent accomodation. Most of them found themselves crowded into the suburbs and the shanty towns in which unemployment, juvenile delinquency, drunkenness, prostitution, crime and corruption became their lot. Colonialism did not only impoverish rural life, it also bastardized urban life.

A second serious social legacy has been the European and Asian settler problem. What made their presence so inimical to Africans was that the Europeans came to occupy most of the fertile lands while the Asians monopolized the retail and wholesale trades. By 1935, this Asian and European problem had assumed very serious proportions for Africa and it has not been entirely resolved to this day.

Furthermore, though colonialism did introduce some social services as we have seen, it must be emphasized that not only were these services grossly inadequate and unevenly distributed in each colony, they were all, by and large, meant primarily for

Photo © The Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London

the benefit of the few white settlers and administrators, hence their concentration in the towns. In Nigeria in the 1930s, whereas there were 12 modern hospitals for 4,000 Europeans in the country, there were only 52 for Africans numbering over 40 million.

In the field of education, what was provided during the colonial days was grossly inadequate, unevenly distributed and badly orientated and therefore not so beneficial as it could have been for Africa. Five different types of educational institutions were established under colonial rule: primary, secondary, teacher-training, technical and university. But while many primary schools had been established by 1860 in British West Africa, it was not until 1876 that the first secondary schools were established in the Gold Coast and Nigeria. It was not until after the Second World War that technical schools and university colleges were established in most parts of Africa.

The curricula provided by all these institutions were determined by the colonial rulers and were closely modelled on, if not carbon copies of, those of the metropolitan countries and therefore irrelevant to the needs of the continent. They also struck at the very roots of African religious beliefs, sanctions and taboos and thereby shook the foundations of African societies, bringing in their trail a sense of uncertainty, frustration and insecurity.

The impact of this inadequate, lopsided and wrongly orientated education on African societies has been profound and almost permanent. First, it left Africa with a huge illiteracy problem, a problem whose solution will take a long time. Secondly, the educated élite that was produced was, by and large, an alienated élite that adored European culture and civilization and looked down on African culture. However, since the élite included the wealthiest people and since they occupied the highest posts available both during and after the colonial era, they came to wield power and influence out of all proportion to their numbers.

Beneficial as the *linguae francae* promoted through the educational systems were, they had the regrettable consequence of preventing the development of some of the indigenous languages into national languages. Twi, Hausa and Swahili could easily have been developed as the national languages of the Gold Coast, Nigeria and the three British East African colonies respectively. In fact, an attempt was made by the colonial administrators of British East Africa to develop Swahili as a *lingua franca* during the 1930s and 1940s, but this attempt was countermanded by the Colonial Office.

Another highly regrettable social impact of colonialism was the deterioration that it caused in the status of women in Africa. This is a new theme which needs further research, but there does not appear to be any doubt that women were inhibited from joining in most of the activities introduced or intensified by colonialism. The colonial world was indeed a man's world and women were not encouraged to play any meaningful role in it.

Moreover, under colonialism Africans in general were looked down upon, humiliated and discriminated against both overtly and covertly. In his recent Reith lectures, Ali Mazrui emphasized this legacy of humiliation imposed on the African by the triple sins of the slave trade, apartheid and colonialism when he declared:

"Africans are not necessarily the most brutalized peoples, but they are certainly the most humiliated in modern history."

Some historians have concluded that "colonialism produced its own gravediggers", while Maugham has maintained that "On the tombstone of the British Empire may be written 'Lost by snobbery".

Worse still was the impact of colonialism in the cultural field. Throughout the colonial period, African art, music, dancing and even history were all not only ignored but positively discouraged or denied. As one speaker declared at the Second Congress of Negro Writers and Artists, in Rome, in 1959: "Among the sins of colonialism, one of the most pernicious, because it was for a long time accepted by the West, was the concept of people without culture." ▶

"The educated élite that was produced* [by colonial education] *was, by and large, an alienated élite that adored European culture and civilization and looked down on African culture. However, since the élite included the wealthiest people and since they occupied the highest posts available both during and after the colonial era, they came to wield power and influence out of all proportion to their numbers." Above, toppers and frock-coats, picture hats and croquet on the lawn at Government House, all these were the status symbols of the "new élite" of the colonial period.

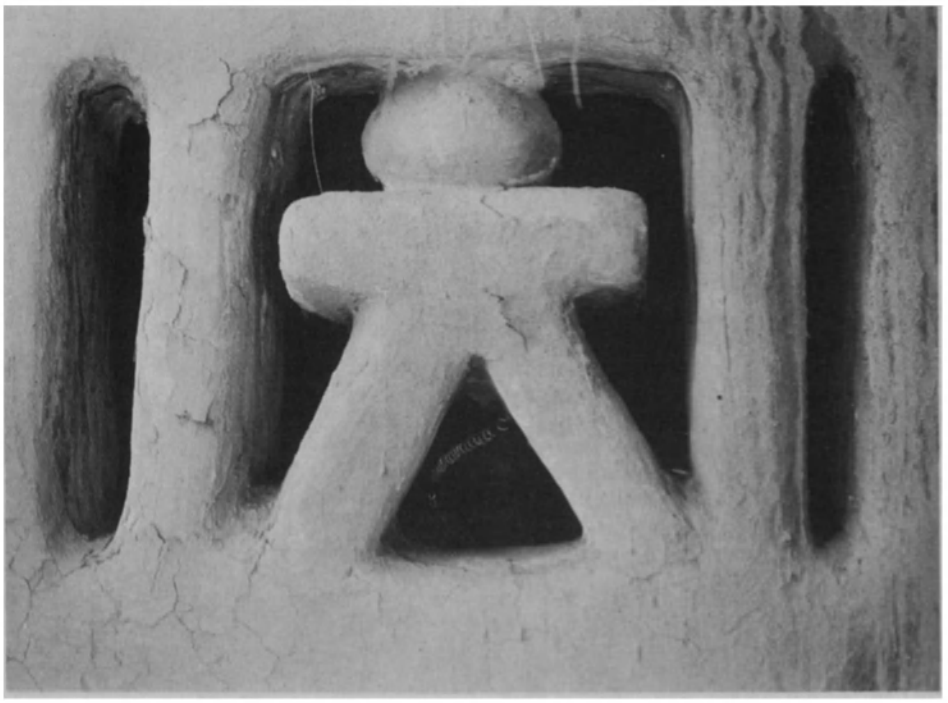


Photo © Denis Fogelgesang, Metz, France

Ornamental detail on the facade of a traditional house of Senegal's Sarakolé people. Traditional architecture using earth as a building material has qualities of form and insulation that are no longer found in modern dwellings made of rubble and corrugated iron sheeting.

▶ Nevertheless, in the cultural field, the impact of colonialism was relatively speaking neither profound nor permanent. Such changes as were introduced in the cultural field, such racial discrimination as was practised, and such condemnation of African culture as was preached, even in the heyday of colonialism, were all confined to the coastal areas and the urban centres and never penetrated into the rural areas where life ran gaily on very much as before. African dance, art, music and traditional religious systems held their own and any borrowings and adaptations were additions rather than substitutions.

In the rural areas, and even to some extent in the urban centres, new beliefs, new gods, new utensils, new artifacts and new objects were added to the old ones. Certainly, in these areas many Christians did and still do retain their belief in their traditional gods. Indeed, in the field of religion, it was if anything the European religions that were Africanized, as is obvious from the rituals of some of the syncretic and millenarian churches, and not the other way round.

What is more important, the ground that was lost in the field of culture, even in the urban centres, has virtually been regained. Today, African art, music and dance are not only taught in educational institutions of all kinds but are now booming in Africa and gaining recognition in Europe. Thus, as far as the cultural field is concerned, colonialism was certainly only a brief episode and its impact skin-deep and ephemeral.

From all the above it should be clear that it is an over-reaction to write off colonialism as an unmitigated disaster for Africa that caused nothing but underdevelopment and backwardness. Equally guilty of over-statement are those colonial apologists who see colonialism as an unqualified blessing for Africa.

But whatever colonialism did for Africans in Africa, given its opportunities, its resources and the power and influence it wielded in Africa at the time, it could and should have done more. As P.C. Lloyd wrote:

"So much more might perhaps have been done had the development of backward territories been seen by the industrial nations as a first priority."

It is precisely because colonial rulers did not see the development of Africans as their first priority or even as a priority at all that they stand condemned. It is for these two reasons that the colonial era will go down in history as a period of growth without development, of the ruthless exploitation of the resources of Africa, and, on balance, of the pauperization and humiliation of the peoples of Africa.

In the long history of Africa, colonialism was merely an episode or interlude in the many-faceted and variegated experiences of its peoples. It was nonetheless an extremely important episode politically, economically and even socially. It marks a clear watershed in the history of Africa whose development has been and will continue to be very much influenced by the colonial impact. The most expedient course of action for African leaders to embark upon today, then, is not to write off colonialism, but rather to be conversant with its impact and to try to redress its shortcomings and its failures.

■ **Albert Adu Boahen**

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Other Unesco publications

The Book Today in Africa, by S.I.A. Kotei. A wide-ranging inquiry into the current situation regarding books in Africa. 1981, 210 pp. 32 F.
Rural Journalism in Africa. 1981, 35 pp. 10 F.

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Africa and the New World

It is in the New World more than in Europe that the African impact has been most far-reaching. In the Americas the great communities of the African diaspora caused by the transatlantic slave trade have strongly influenced the societies in which they took root. The black influence on the national culture of modern Brazil has been particularly profound, and in most Caribbean societies the cultures of the black communities have become preponderant. But the children of the diaspora have also turned to the home continent and played a decisive role in the history of modern Africa: many returned from exile, while others influenced the development of nationalism and pan-Africanism. Above, a *macumba* ceremony in Brazil. This shamanistic religion (known as *candomblé* in Brazil's Bahia State) is based on a syncretism of Bantu fetishes, Roman Catholic symbols, and Sudanese rituals.